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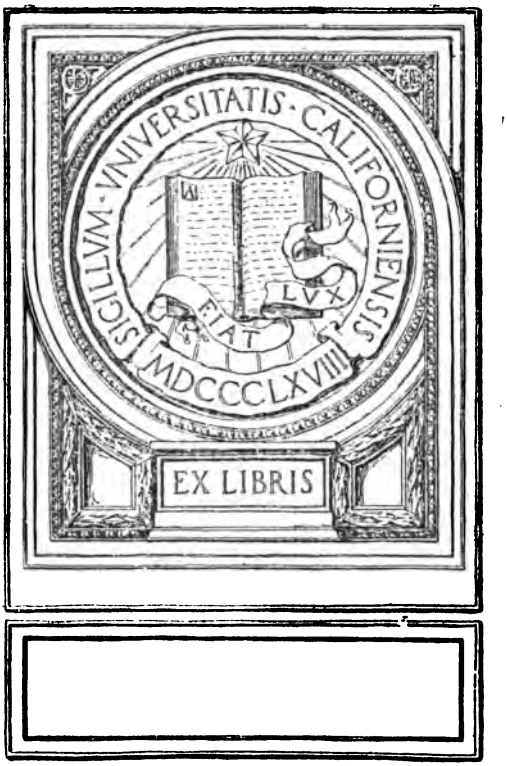
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METHODS

OF

TEACHING MODERN LANGUAGES

PAPERS ON THE VALUE AND ON METHODS OF MODERN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION.

New Edition.

BY

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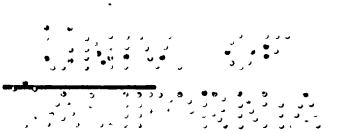

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In all departments of education teachers to-day, more than ever before, are reading the literature of their profession; and it is hoped that modern language instructors may find in the following papers stimulus and suggestion in a branch of education that is now recognized as exceedingly important in any scheme of liberal training.

Teachers of the modern languages have repeatedly inquired for copies of papers or addresses dealing with their profession, and it was suggested to us that it would be very acceptable and helpful if we should publish a collection of some of the best thoughts on the value and methods of Modern Language Teaching. We have therefore compiled this book of addresses and articles that have come to our notice or have been mentioned to us by prominent friends of modern language instruction. By kindly consenting to their publication in this form, the authors have co-operated with us in presenting pedagogical opinions of interest to the thoughtful consideration of scholars and teachers.

The order of these papers is due partly to their respective dates, and partly to the order in which they were suggested or presented to us.

D. C. Heath & Co.

March, 1898.

Note.—In the edition of 1915, the preliminary Report of the Committee of the National Education Association, made in July, 1914, has been included, and three recent papers substituted for some of those in earlier editions.

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METHODS OF TEACHING MODERN LANGUAGES.

MODERN LANGUAGES AS A COLLEGE DISCIPLINE.[1]

BY PROFESSOR A. M. ELLIOTT, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY.

THERE is one aspect of the Greek-Modern Language question on which there has been no special stress laid, so far as I have seen, in the various discussions of it that Mr. Adams's paper has called out; viz., the importance of modern language study as a special disciplinary factor of our higher education. In truth, the few references to the subject outside of the favorable view held in the Phi-Beta-Kappa oration would seem to imply a denial of the existence of such an element altogether in the modern idioms as compared with the classic tongues. The eminent president of Yale College asserts that they "are distinctly recognized as essential conditions of professional and business success, or accomplishments of gentlemanly culture." Professor Josiah P. Cooke of Harvard assures us that, in his opinion, "to compare German literature with the Greek, or, what is worse, French literature with the Latin, as a means of culture, implies a forgetfulness of the true spirit of literary culture." And a leading contemporary journal, after qualifying all controversy of this sort as an "inexcusable display of ignorance," adds with a

[1] Read before the Modern Language Association of America, 1887, and reprinted with the permission of the author.

sort of oracular sanctity, "And for philology, there practically is no foundation except Latin and Greek, — and Greek rather than Latin." Such expressions as these show most clearly the dogmatic spirit in which this whole subject is approached by many advocates of the exclusive classical idea when the question of training comes up. As zealous holders of the only true faith, they would fain exclude the converts to modernism from all the distinctive elevating influences of their creed, and would relegate them to the domain of purely utilitarian interests, or to the changing caprices of society; and this subordinate position is granted them more from the necessities of the age in which we live than from any special feeling of their worth as members of the great corporate body of scholars. For the scholar in truth it is even hinted, in some cases, that their field is useless, and for the educator in particular the subjects that occupy them are regarded as a species of cumbersome, worthless lumber that litters up the mental workshop, and that must be gotten rid of as soon as possible, if the range of the active powers of the mind is to be widened. In other words, it is set down as a tenet of axiomatic wisdom that modern languages have no place whatever among the formative elements which help to develop the mental faculties. This doctrine, however extreme it may seem, when thus plainly stated, is held by a large majority of those who represent, at present, the guiding force in matters of education throughout our country; but I apprehend that it is for the most part the result of traditional beliefs, or of the unhappy failure of methods, or of sheer prejudice in a few cases, rather than of actual experience in such matters. It may be doubted, in fact, whether this important branch of learning has been represented by rigid scientific methods in our educational system sufficient to test even the most elementary worth of its subjects as factors of a living power suited to intellectual growth. Until this shall be done, it is difficult to understand the fairness of any comparison

between them and another set of kindred subjects that has long received special cultivation by the most eminent scholars, and has held a prominent place in the training of our youth. In the controversy now before the country with reference to the merits of the study of Greek in our higher institutions, as compared with that of science and modern languages, I fail to see the appropriateness of disparaging remarks on the educating qualities of the latter, especially as to that part of the question that touches upon the modern idioms. Science has had the chance to cast off her swaddling clothes, and it is now only a question of time as to the position she will eventually occupy in the list of studies that are to constitute the building-elements of the mind. With the modern languages it is wholly different. They have but just started upon the road of a true scientific development, and will naturally require some opportunity to show their value as educating elements. But, on general principles, such comparisons as these are more or less odious in all circumstances, and they become especially so when there is an evident intention to multiply the claims to superiority of a given department of learning over others that are allowed few or more of the privileges that attach to the would-be favorite. The inconsistency of comparing the potential forces of any two systems of educational training without first according to both of them similar opportunities of cultivation, and like circumstances of growth, is obvious to every one who has not the drag-chain of some creed about his neck.

The reproach flung at the modern languages by the partisans of the exclusive order of classical studies, that they do not show brilliant results of scholarship in this country, is but a covert way of begging the question in a discussion of their relative standing in any grade of culture. Up to now no chance has been given to show whether favorable results may be obtained from them, since other linguistic learning has held the sway, to the driving out of all serious modern language

study. The time for pursuing them is often cut down to a minimum; far less teaching force, proportionately, is allowed to them than to other departments; no fixed standard of requirement is set for them, as an academic discipline; in fine, they are practically crowded out of many college schedules, and then mercilessly inveighed against because those who follow them do not present, with all these disadvantages, as high a standard of critical linguistic acquirement as if they had spent years of careful preparation in them. Until they shall have had a fair trial in the hands of well-trained, competent teachers; until the study of them shall have been given all the favor in time and position which are accorded to the classics in our colleges, it is difficult to see the justness of any demand that they shall make the same showing of general training or of special scholarly attainments.

If we inquire into the depreciatory feeling with which the modern languages are regarded by scholars generally, we shall find, I think, that the responsibility for a great part of it, at least, rests upon the shoulders of those who have the chief power of appointment to positions in our higher institutions. The fatal college nepotism that has pervaded this whole system in many places has practically rendered it a sort of closed corporation to all who are educated outside the pale of their own individual sanctuaries. The natural consequence has been that young, inexperienced, and, only too often, poorly prepared assistants have been called to office, and through them the departments have had to suffer not alone for a lack of efficient instruction, but also in the general appreciation both of the student and of an intelligent public. This misfortune has fallen more frequently upon the modern languages, perhaps, than upon any other departments, from the simple fact that the idea is so generally prevalent that anybody can teach them.

We have only to examine a considerable number of catalogues of our colleges to see that this unfortunate state of

affairs is much more extensive than is generally supposed. A boy who has spent one academic year of two hours per week, for example, on his French, is then called to teach it; or, again, a gentleman who knows nothing of either French or German receives an appointment in them, and goes abroad for two months in the summer to prepare himself for the important position; such are but too common illustrations of the kind of hands into which these branches often fall. What wonder, then, in such circumstances, that the pupil should lose all respect for his subject, and grow conceited with reference to his own acquirements in it, while as yet he has not an inkling of decent knowledge. This procedure is a downright disgrace to any system of instruction, and should be forced aside by the timely action of the leading institutions of this country, by placing all language study upon an equal footing with the same rights and privileges, and by demanding like results of discipline from both the classical and modern idioms. The time would then soon come in which the latter would no longer be regarded as fit tools simply for the business man, or as only pleasing accomplishments of the society *dilettanti*.

The importance of having specially trained teachers in this work would seem manifest from the very nature of the subject, and yet no such necessity has been generally recognized by us up to the present time. That intelligent young men become in consequence simple information machines, stuffed with systems of facts that they have no chance to digest, and that they come to play mere parrot *rôles*, learning their task-work without any stimulus to awaken their powers of observation or shape their judgment, is unfortunately a sad fact in much of our modern language study. A further consequence of this state of things is a degradation of the subject, a stifling of all spontaneous interest, and a deadening apathy on the part of the student. No incentive is placed before him to awaken curiosity for learning, to strengthen the perceptive

faculties, and to cultivate the power of concentrated mental effort. It is to this end that I would urge here an intelligent historical, disciplinary study of these subjects, as peculiarly adapted to a wide range and variety of minds. In recognizing this cardinal fact, German educators have given them an important place in their schools and gymnasia, and for the last two decades have been thereby rewarded with most gratifying results in the general linguistic training of their youth. Nowhere else as there has stress been laid upon the philological study of these idioms, and the natural consequence has followed that faulty methods have been rooted out, the standard of their appreciation everywhere raised, and rich fruits garnered in their advance in academic discipline. It was this religious regard for the spirit rather than the letter of language that lifted Germany out of the Slough of Despond in which all linguistic study was sunk three-quarters of a century ago, and gave her such vantage ground over all other nations that they will probably never be able to overtake her in this work. Here, too, just in proportion as methods have been bettered and the true spirit of linguistic training developed, the modern languages have risen higher and higher in the scale of potent agencies for mind-culture, and, in some parts of the empire, have for years stood beside the classics and shared with them all their rights and privileges. The beginnings of a similiar change, too, have been noted in our own country, where, in proportion as the worth of these studies has become known, they have universally taken a higher stand among the *disciplinæ* for special education. The wealth of material they offer for philological training and historical investigation is becoming more appreciated every day, and it is now only a bold spirit and rigidly scientific method that are generally needed to raise them, in the estimation of scholars, above the plane of simple "polite accomplishments." The principles and scope of their scientific study have never been stated clearly and sharply enough in our plans of college edu-

cation, and the result has been that they are only too often regarded as fit subjects for those who work little, and therefore as necessarily constituting a part of the "soft electives," that "Serbonian bog" where all intellectual virtues are swallowed up.

The defective methods according to which they are sometimes taught, and the summary manner in which they are frequently shoved aside when they clash with other studies, cannot but discredit them in the mind of the serious student. It cannot be doubted, too, that it is a grave mistake for educators to depreciate their value so long as they occupy a place in our scheme of instruction, since it is absurd to suppose they do not exert a detrimental influence on the habits of discipline in other departments when they are thus disparagingly treated. No one set of disciplinary elements can be specially neglected, as a part of any given system, without producing baneful effects upon others connected with it, however remote they may be in subject-matter, or different in mode of presentation. But we are obliged to confess that this attitude of college authorities toward the modern language branches is in part, at least, the fault of the department itself. The shiftless, slip-shod instruction that boasts of teaching any language with two hours per week, during a single academic year, must naturally tend to make a slouch of the otherwise honest, enthusiastic student, and turn into a conceited charlatan the pupil who, for lack of previous sound training, is disposed to skim over his subjects. To earnest and experienced educators such a procedure must seem sheer nonsense, and it is to be expected, therefore, that they will have as little of it as possible. The fact of the matter is, that our whole system of modern language instruction needs overhauling in this respect before it can hope to command the consideration that it ought to have, both from scholars in other departments, and from the public at large. It is useless to plead for favor on the one hand, and blame those who underrate its value on the

other, unless we recast our methods, and show by convincing results that there is abundant material for our work. The subject-matter is surely not at fault with reference to the present abnormal position this branch of learning holds in the estimation of scholars. Obloquy has been thrown upon it because of unjust prejudices in certain cases; in others because the new-comer does not tread the accustomed ruts of a traditional creed. It is, therefore, viewed with suspicion; but until its powers shall have been tested by the same discipline of years required for other departments, and it shall have failed to meet the demands made of it, we can hardly esteem it fair to condemn it to the exclusive and not flattering *régime* of society circles and of business interests. No means, in my opinion, could at present be more efficient in raising this subject to a higher level of development than the introduction of a thorough historical basis for all college work. It is stating a trite fact when we assert that every intelligent pupil is interested in understanding the whys and wherefores of phenomena that he has learned to use mechanically. How much greater interest, then, must a subject arouse in him from the beginning, if, instead of playing a parrot-like part, he is led to exercise his ingenuity and test his powers in the discovery of relations before hidden to him; and this he will readily do if the history is steadily kept before him of the growth of form and expression, with their resemblances to modes of thought already familiar to him, and to the natural development of the varying phenomena of speech in general. Language thus ceases to be a sort of "Fifteen Puzzle" to him, since he sees philosophy enough in it to lubricate the otherwise dry machinery of grammar. He learns with zest any new series of facts connected with it because they serve, in their turn, to further illustrate the principles that have become fundamental notions, so to speak, in his mind. And no experienced educator, I think, will maintain that the learner can acquire these habits of comparison and reflection more

readily in a vehicle or system of thought the farther separated it is from his own. The real training that belongs to all language-study must come more rapidly in proportion as we can eliminate differences of idioms during the primary stages of it, and carry the pupil back to a few principal sources of growth, which have their *raison d'être* in a common origin. The modern idioms will suggest themselves, here, as most valuable adjuncts to this rational mode of language-study, since their processes of creation and development lie within the range of strict historical proof, and their life-history may be followed up step by step through all the stages of their complex growth. If it is the object to get the learner as far away as possible from his natural intellectual bent, as some writers on this subject would seem to suggest, why not ply him with Chinese or Arabic formula, which would require extraordinary mental gymnastics? Why not force him, from the start, to spend time in casting his thoughts in the artificial mould of Sanskrit or some other complex system, as foreign as possible to his natural analytic routine? It is precisely to avoid this squandering of time and energy that a study of the modern European languages is so useful before proceeding to that of the older tongues. The student in them becomes acquainted with forms of thought-expression closely allied to his own; his mind can suit itself to the new clothing with less waste of time than by the reverse process; and thus by a regular progression from the better-known types of his own tongue to the less familiar word-building and phrase-setting of the new idiom, he attains the objects of his labors. I hold, in truth, that the rational way to learn language is the same as for other things; that is, to move from the known to the unknown, to pass from the native tongue to the next-lying living system, where this is possible, and thence to that form of speech in which the so-called dead language is locked up. To study Latin, therefore, I would begin with French and work on to a tolerable mastery of Italian, after which the mother-

idiom would come almost of itself, and all three languages would be learned more understandingly than the ancient tongue alone can possibly be according to the present system; and the time required for all three, I think, would be found little more than what we now spend on Latin. However unorthodox this doctrine may seem, I have seen it tried in a few cases with such marked success that I am sure, if for Mr. Adams some such bridge as this could have been thrown across the chasm between his native English and the domain of Greek roots, we should never have known "A College Fetich." But, on the other hand, even if we accept the current theory, and place the older idioms first in the line of linguistic topics to be presented to the mind, irrespective of any natural relation, it seems to me self-evident that our order of progression would be incomplete if we should allow any break to exist between the training-period of youth and the future practical activity of the man. Between college and life there ought to be no gap. The ending of every system of instruction, whatever it may be, should naturally lap on to the sphere of those broader and more varied duties that crowd upon the man in the fierce battle of his after-life. And I cannot but feel, therefore, that Schleiermacher is wholly correct when he remarks in his *Erziehungslehre*, "If the natural passage from the school into life is not reached, then we have either been upon a false route, or we did not begin right." Have we in America struck this bridge in language-study? Does the present position of modern languages in our higher institutions, as connecting-link between the old and the new, between classicism and modern life, fully represent that stage of careful transition discipline which our age demands?

OBSERVATIONS UPON METHOD IN THE TEACHING OF MODERN LANGUAGES.[1]

BY PROFESSOR CALVIN THOMAS, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

It is a very common practice in professional discussions to begin with some remarks upon the importance of one's subject. I, however, will venture upon a different kind of exordium by expressing the opinion that my subject is not of much importance; or, at any rate, that it is not half so momentous as a great many people suppose it to be. I have a conviction which has been strengthening for some time, that the subject of method in teaching receives in general more attention than it deserves. I think it probable, nay to my mind it is certain, that a good deal of the teaching that goes on in this country is suffering severely because of laying too much stress upon matters of method. Quite a large portion of the teaching fraternity are making of method, if not a fetish to worship, at least a hobby to ride, and that to the detriment of the country's highest pedagogical interests. If I can trust my own observation, a person's reverence for what is commonly called method usually varies inversely with his own intellectual breadth.

Let these remarks of mine not be misunderstood. There is a sense in which a teacher's method is the most important thing about him, is, in fact, the essential source of his power and his influence. His method in this sense is nothing less than his entire character displaying itself in his work. It designates not so much a mode of procedure for accomplishing

[1] Read at the first meeting of the Michigan Schoolmasters' Club, 1886.

a particular piece of work, as rather the spirit which informs and directs all his work. In other words, it is the working expression of his personality, his general way of imparting his own intellectual life to his pupil. But the word method is much more commonly used as synonymous with routine. It has reference to the details of procedure, and is a name, not for the incommunicable secret of personality, but for the easily divulged secret of machinery. Now, it is method in this latter sense that I think receives more respect and more attention than it deserves. I am aware, of course, that it is not easy always to keep these two senses rigidly apart in one's mind, and to respect method in the former sense while thinking but indifferently of it in the latter. One's routine may be intimately bound up with his personality, but it need not be so, and usually it is not so. Nor do I say that matters of routine are never of any moment. There may be circumstances in which it is highly important to decide between the comparative merits of two or more processes for accomplishing a given result. What I deprecate is the wide-spread tendency I observe to treat routine as if that were the thing of chief importance; as if it were the real key to a teacher's power and usefulness. For that it certainly is not. There are always two other questions upon which more depends than upon this questions of, How? These are the questions, What? and Why? Let the teacher put to himself the inquiries: What knowledge or capacity is it that I am seeking to impart? and to what end? Let him settle these clearly in his own mind, and then the question, How best to teach? will usually take care of itself. At any rate, it will no longer seem a difficult or bewildering problem.

Having now defined my position with regard to method in general, I turn to the subject of modern languages for the purpose of illustrating, amplifying, and perhaps here and there qualifying, the views already set forth.

In recent years the public has heard a great deal about a so-

called natural method in the teaching of languages. This method is really nothing new in the history of the world; it has been known and used for centuries. But it has acquired great notoriety in this country of late on account of the vigorous crusade its votaries have been carrying on against the traditional practice of the schools. What this traditional practice is, is of course well enough known. A pupil who is to study, let us say German, is first required to commit to memory the grammatical inflections of the language. For the purpose of aiding his memory in the retention of the grammatical forms, and also for the purpose of giving him the beginnings of a vocabulary, he reads as he goes along a certain number of easy German exercises, and likewise translates a number of easy English exercises into German. All of this study is essentially grammatical. The learner then takes up some German reader, with which he works for a few weeks or months, as the case may be, the aim being to fix thoroughly in his mind the elementary principles of the language he has been studying. After this he takes up the study of literature, and his goal is henceforth simply to learn to read German as readily and as intelligently as possible.

Now, a few years ago we began to hear from certain quarters that all this is wrong; that a pupil should learn a foreign tongue just as he learned his mother tongue in his infancy; that is, by at once beginning to hear it spoken and to imitate what he hears. We are told that the initial study of grammar is unnatural, since the child hears nothing of the grammar of his own language until after he has learned to speak said language, and to speak it, mayhap, with commendable correctness. From this the corollary naturally follows that the teacher's chief effort should be to see to it that his pupil shall of all things learn to speak the language he is studying. The originators of this agitation were in the main very excellent teachers, who would have succeeded with any method. As it was, having secured good results of a certain kind, they began

to think the magic was in the method rather than in themselves. They were able to secure striking testimonials from distinguished persons as to their success in teaching pupils to speak, and so they started an agitation. And the agitation has grown. Its promoters have multiplied and spread abroad through the land. They are busily writing articles, essays, prefaces, in praise of their doctrine. To a certain extent they have got the ear of the public, which is usually ready to listen to any one that comes talking majestically about "modern ways" of doing things, and winking his eye and biting his thumb at the expense of the old fogies. Many of these energetic reformers use very positive language. They tell us in effect that a notable educational conflict has been going on, which has now, however, been decided in their favor. They claim to have carried through a great reform, and do not hesitate to assure the public that any one who in these days continues to teach a modern language in the old way is behind the age. Out of much literature in this vein which is continually falling under my eye I will quote only the following, from the preface to a lately published German Reader: —

"It is now conceded by most teachers," says this writer, "that, in learning any modern language, little is gained by beginning with the study of the grammar, and that the most successful method is the natural one, by which a child learns to speak its own language; i. e., by constant practice in conversation. A mass of grammatical rules and forms at the outset renders the subject dry and uninteresting, and the time so spent can be much more profitably employed in colloquial exercises, which are absolutely necessary in acquiring fluency of speech, no matter how thoroughly the rules of grammar have been mastered."

Surely it is trifling with serious matters to say of such a statement as this that it is important if true. If true, it is, in the light of what is now actually going on in the great majority of American schools and colleges, enough to take one's breath away.

What, then, are the merits of this position? What are the general merits of this controversy so far as there is any controversy? (The quarrel is after all a very one-sided one.) This is a question which, as I surmise, must be of especial interest to persons who may have found it necessary or convenient to undertake to teach a modern language before having attained to a very wide or deep scholarship in the language, and before they have formed through personal experience an independent judgment with regard to the matter under consideration. Such persons may well wish to know how a conservative teacher can go on his way and live and labor unabashed in the face of all these breezy proclamations like the one quoted.

Well, I have something to say on that subject; but, before proceeding to say it, I desire to remark incidentally that the statement quoted is very far from being true. What the writer says is: "*It is now conceded by most teachers,* that in learning any modern language, little is gained by beginning with the study of the grammar." To be true, the statement should run: "It is now conceded, and for that matter always has been conceded by most teachers, that with pupils of a certain kind, and for the attainment of certain results, little is gained by beginning with the study of the grammar." Or to speak more explicitly: all teachers are agreed that if you wish to teach any one to speak a language, the learner must be given practice in speaking. The sooner you begin, and the more practice you offer, the better. But this is not an admission wrung but yesterday from the teaching profession by the successes of the natural method. Nobody, so far as I know, ever held or advocated any other opinion.

Then, as to that other observation that a "mass of grammatical rules and forms at the outset renders the subject dry and uninteresting," when shall we hear the end of such nonsense? When shall we see the end of this wretched desire to make all things soft and sweet for the youths and maidens of

this generation ? Grammar deals with the facts and the laws of language, and language is the most important of all human institutions. Whatever interest, whatever charm, attaches to the study of any historical science ought to attach to the study of language. The facts of grammar are as interesting as any other facts, and the laws of grammar are as interesting as other laws. It was doubtless unfortunate to subordinate sense, poetry, philosophy, history, — everything to grammar, as was done by a good many teachers, especially of the Greek and Latin, a few years ago. There are better uses for the masterpieces of literature than to be made so many vehicles for teaching grammar. But, on the other hand, it is equally pernicious to speak of grammar and to treat it as if it were some miasma from which the dear boys and girls must be tenderly shielded just as far as possible. Let them learn the grammar and learn it well. It will be good for them. If the teacher has the instincts of a scholar himself, the facts of language will not seem dull or uninteresting to him ; and if they do not seem so to him, he will usually contrive that they shall not seem so to his pupil. But suppose that they do seem so ? Or rather, suppose the learner occasionally has a sensation that he is working ? What of it ? There are worse things in the world than that. He is supposed to be preparing in school for life, and when he gets out of school the Genius of Life will admonish him at every turn that valuable acquisitions have to be worked for. He may as well learn early to face this simple doctrine and to make the best of it. It is no part of the teacher's business to make things easy at the expense of thoroughness. It is a mistake if he thinks that the real and lasting regard of his pupil can be won in that way. Healthy boys and girls, and young men and young women in school and college, do not want an easy time. They wish for work to do, and they enjoy work. It is not their desire to float down the stream with a soft-hearted pedagogue to keep them clear of all the difficulties and asperities of navigation.

They prefer to paddle, and if the course lies up the stream, against a tolerably swift current, they like it all the better. In the high school they may talk freely about the sweets of idleness, and may at times seem to be rather fertile in precautions against over-exertion. So the college student will often profess to have a lively affinity for what he calls a "soft snap." But this is simply a conventional student dialect, — a surface indication, which belies what is underneath. The truth is that the vast majority of students in both school and college prefer to be kept busy, and they have, both in the long run and in the short run, the greatest respect for the teacher who gives them work to do, insists upon their doing it, and does not seem over anxious to make things easy. *Res severa verum gaudium* is the true student motto the world over.

I am of course not saying that of two ways for accomplishing a given end the more difficult and laborious is to be chosen on the ground that students after all like to work, and that work is good for them. By no means. There are always subjects enough to learn which will tax one's strength all that it ought to be taxed. It is therefore always a proper and wise economy to select the easiest way of attaining any given result. What I am arguing is, that when a line of work has once proved its usefulness, it is not to be discarded and spoken ill of simply because the learner finds it difficult or "dry." The road which he thinks dry and difficult may be precisely the best road for him to travel.

I come now to the application of the thought expressed some time ago, which was, in effect, that any controversy concerning method in teaching will usually be found to have underlying it a more important question as to what should be taught. This is certainly true in the case before us. The issue between the advocates of the natural method and those who use the other method does not turn upon the comparative merits of two ways for accomplishing the same purpose; it

turns upon the comparative merits of two different purposes to be accomplished.

The alternative is simply this: Is it best in teaching a modern language to make it our chief aim that the learner shall acquire some ability to speak the language, or shall we make it our chief business to teach him to read the language with some scientific understanding of it? If one accepts the former as the true ideal of school and college instruction, then it is very certain that the natural method, or any modification of it which affords the utmost possible practice in speaking, is the best method. If, on the other hand, one accepts the latter as the true ideal, then it is equally certain that the other method is the better.

What, then, is the true ideal? What ought we to aim at in the teaching of a modern language? Or rather, what ought we to aim at in the teaching of a modern language in school and college? This limitation of the question is of importance, since the circumstances under which we are compelled to work in school and college may very possibly exercise a determining influence upon us when we are attempting to decide the questions what to aim at and how to go to work. For example: I might, and very certainly I should, proceed in one way with a large class of university students whom I expected to meet four times a week, and in quite another way with a child who was to live with me for several years in my own family; and in still another way with a class of three or four whom I expected to be with me for several hours each day. We must look at this question with reference to the circumstances that are, and forever must be, imposed upon us in school and college. German, for example, is not begun by our pupils in their early childhood, nor can the study be kept up for ten or twelve years. In the present crowded state of our school and collegiate courses such a thing is out of the question, and it must forever remain out of the question unless it can be shown that some great, some very great advantage

would result from it. In my opinion no such showing will ever be made. I admit, of course, that if all persons who studied German in our schools were to begin the study in childhood, and to begin it with the expectation of keeping it up through a long succession of years, then certain questions might arise with regard to the teaching of the language which are not now living questions at all. I, however, am very far from thinking that such an innovation would be desirable. So that I can claim to be discussing this subject here not simply from the standpoint of what is and what is likely to continue to be, but also from the standpoint of what ought to be.

Upon hearing this inquiry, What should be our aim in the teaching of German? many persons, particularly those who are themselves unschooled, will be inclined to answer at once: Why, it should be your aim to impart to your pupil a complete mastery of the language, so that he can read, write, and speak it; can even think in it, or crack jokes and write verses in it. But those who have done some work upon a foreign language, and especially those who have tried to teach one, will understand at once that a programme of this sort would be simply what Mr. Tilden called a "barren ideality." It is of no use to hitch our wagon to a star in that fashion. To learn to speak any language in any decent manner demands long and assiduous practice in speaking. To learn to speak it at all well demands long association with those who speak it as their native tongue. And this requires time. To learn to read a language, again, requires long practice in reading. One must have read a large number of books from different periods of the language. He must have acquired some first-hand familiarity with its literature. And this, again, requires time. We have here two different disciplines. Now, if in our school work one of these disciplines is accented, the other must be neglected. There is simply no other way, without involving a very much greater expenditure of time than we now make. Which, then, shall we accent?

Among the great unschooled public the ability, real or apparent, to speak a foreign language undoubtedly counts as a great thing. They look upon such ability as the natural and necessary outcome of linguistic study. Parents covet the accomplishment for their children. For a long time a little French was a necessary item in the intellectual outfit of a fashionable young lady. All over the country multitudes of boys and girls are trying to learn to speak German, and that without reference to any particular use they expect to make of the acquisition, but from the general impression that it's a good thing to do. Very intelligent people are now and then found crying out that it is a disgrace that students should pursue the study of German four or five years, and then not be able to speak it. As if that, and that only, were the true criterion by which to decide whether the student has got any good from the study.

Well, now let us inquire what is the precise value, for average graduates of our schools and colleges, of the ability to speak a foreign language? I say average graduates, since it is obviously with reference to them that we must shape our courses of study and our methods of teaching. We cannot shape these with reference to the occasional student who might wish to prepare for a residence in Germany or for a position as German clerk in a business house.

Whatever value the ability to speak a foreign language may have for average graduates ought to be found, I should say, along one of two lines. Its value ought to be either practical or educational. I am aware of no other lines of importance along which its value ought reasonably to be sought. The word "practical" I use here in the manner of the world's people as synonymous with commercial. That is, to be sure, a very vicious use of the word. I would not for a moment admit that, even if a much better case could be made out than can be for the commercial value of the ability to speak a foreign language, that therefore we should make the imparting

of such ability the chief aim of our teaching in the schools. We cannot throw too often or too hard in the face of the public the fact that our business is educational. Our work is the building up and the leading out of minds, and not the teaching of crafts, trades, tricks, and *techniques* to get a living with. Whatever has a high educational value has a high *practical* value, since nothing is of more practical moment than the training of minds. But using the dialect of the age, what is to be said of the practical, i. e., commercial, value of the ability to speak a foreign tongue? This is a matter about which I imagine that a good deal of loose thinking and talking prevails, which have given rise to misapprehension.

It is of course true that the command of two languages has, for one who is seeking a position in a community where there is a large foreign population, a real commercial value. To deny this would be absurd. Professional and business men are continually saying in our hearing, "I'd give a thousand dollars if I could speak German." The boy or the girl who desires employment in a city like this, or like Detroit, undoubtedly has an advantage if able to speak German. But what kind of ability is it that is meant in such cases? A smattering of the language will not suffice. It is not enough that the applicant should be able to say, Good-morning! and How do you do? and What time is it? It will not suffice if he even have at his tongue's end the whole wisdom of Ollendorf, and be able to say ever so glibly that the wife of the butcher is more handsome than the nephew of the baker. But he must be able to *speak German;* not as school-children use that phrase, not as it is used by the professors in summer schools of languages, but as men of business and of the world understand it. He must have, at least for all the purposes of the position that he seeks, a fluent and ready command of the language.

But cannot this superior grade of ability be imparted in the schools? Practically it cannot. It is indeed true that

if any competent teacher were to take a very small class of boys, all of whom wished to become German clerks in a dry-goods store, and if he were to meet them every day for an hour and talk nothing but dry-goods store to them for a matter of two or three years, he might thus contrive to give them an indifferent preparation for entrance upon the duties of German clerk in a dry-goods store. But their preparation would be none of the best. They could get a much better one, and that too in less time, by means of an apprenticeship, or by living in a German family. And then the time has not come for managing our educational institutions on that principle.

But perhaps it may be asked whether it is not possible, by means of general conversational instruction and practice in the schools, to impart such command of the German language for all purposes, that the learner upon leaving school can fill any position where a knowledge of German is required? In answer to that question it must be said emphatically that it is not possible. The conditions of the school forbid. The teacher meets his pupils in classes (and these classes are often large), five hours or less each week of the school year. Each pupil has a few minutes' practice on certain days of the week in speaking German. All the rest of the time, with his teacher, his schoolmates, his parents at home, he speaks English. Now, no one can learn to speak a foreign language in that way. To do that requires months or even years of constant practice, through association with those who speak the language as their mother tongue. You can no more teach a person to speak a foreign language by means of class instruction given at stated intervals, than you can teach him to swim by giving courses of illustrated lectures in a 7×9 bath-room. The thing never has been done, never will be done by the natural method or by any other method; and any one who professes to be able to do it may be safely set down as a quack. I know very well that some rather striking results can be achieved in this direction. I have experimented with

the matter myself, and am familiar with the reports of those who have done much more and much better than I can claim to have done. It is possible by sedulous attention to the subject, continued through a considerable period of time, to teach a class to speak German in the class-room with tolerable fluency and correctness. Any one not an expert listening to such a class easily gets the impression that they can really handle the German language, — can actually "speak German" in some proper sense of the term. But alas, it is only the class-room dialect that they speak. Their discourse moves in a very narrow range. They do but say over certain phrases and sentences and idioms that they have heard and learned. Outside of this beaten round of expression, which they never hear or need to use outside of the class-room, they are perfectly helpless. On the street, at the store, in society, their German "conversation" leaves them in the lurch at once when they attempt to operate it. And so they take to using their costly acquisition of foreign speech simply for purposes of diversion. They say, "*Wie befinden Sie sich,*" or "*Comment vous portez-vous?*" where they might just as well say, "How are you?" and make no further use of their accomplishment. The simple truth is that the attainable results in this direction of teaching students in the class-room to speak a foreign language are so insignificant as to be utterly devoid of any practical value whatever, out in the world. And so there is no use in aiming at these results with reference to their commercial value, even if we were to admit the propriety of teaching subjects in school and college out of purely commercial considerations.

But what of the educational value of this acquisition? This is for us the really important question. I have spoken of its supposed commercial value only for the purpose of correcting what I deem a common misapprehension. I have tried to show that the smattering of conversational ability which the schools can impart is worthless on the market, and, conversely, that

the kind of ability which has a market value is beyond the reach of school training to impart. If we should attempt to impart it by quadrupling the time given to the study, and by devoting all our energies to teaching conversation, we should even then be coming into hopeless competition with other easier and more expeditious methods of acquiring the same thing. One who especially desired to learn to speak German could learn it so much better by living a few months in a German family. Furthermore, in this country, wherever a foreign population is numerous enough to make a knowledge of two languages commercially valuable, there are always a multitude of boys and girls growing up who are bilingual from childhood. They are usually numerous enough to fill all positions where their particular capacity is specially required. Who would pass by them to take up with the imperfect, unsatisfactory product of the schools?

We must, therefore, it seems to me, admit that if the ability to speak a foreign language has any value that is within the reach of the schools, that value must be educational. How is it, then, with regard to this? There is a wide-spread impression that the ability to speak a foreign language is in itself an important evidence of culture. It would appear as if this impression ought to correct itself when one sees how very many people there are in the world who can speak two or more languages with some fluency, and who are nevertheless without anything that can properly be called education. But the impression does not correct itself. People go on assuming that any person who can speak another tongue than his native one must have passed through a course of intellectual discipline proportionate in value to his fluency in speaking. In the minds of many, — and even of many who ought to know better, — fluency of speech is the only criterion by which to judge whether a course of study in a modern language has been profitable.

Now, all this is very erroneous. The ability to speak a for-

eign language is a matter of practice, not of intellectual discipline. Proficiency in the accomplishment depends simply upon the opportunity one has had, and the use one has made of his opportunity, for practice. It is a trick, a craft, a *technique*, quite comparable with the ability to telegraph, or to write short-hand. It has in itself only a very slight and a very low educational value. Suppose that an English-speaking boy some day learns at school that the German for "All men are mortal" is "*Alle Menschen sind sterblich.*" What has he added to his intellectual outfit? Nothing at all. He has simply got hold of a new set of symbols by which to communicate, if necessary, an idea that was already in his mind. From an educational point of view his acquisition is of the same order as if he had learned to tick off the English words on a telegraph instrument, to write them in short-hand, or to set them in type in a printing-office. But education deals with the getting of new ideas, with the enlargement of the mental horizon. The thought that I am here seeking to present finds a good illustration in the ease with which very young children learn to talk in a foreign language. If a member of this club, ignorant of German, were to go to Germany for a year's residence, and to take with him his three-year-old son; and if then he were to engage a teacher for himself, and work hard for a year, making use of all the expedients which are usually resorted to for the purpose of learning to speak German, meanwhile letting his son play at liberty about the house and street, he would find at the end of the year that he himself would be able to speak German in a halting, imperfect, unidiomatic, humiliating sort of way, which would betray his foreign extraction at every word. The little four-year-old, on the other hand, would use the language, so far as he needed to use language at all, just like a native. The reverse of this depressing picture is that upon returning home the child would, at the end of a second year, completely have lost his acquisition, while the father's would have suffered but little.

This furnishes us with the real argument against sending our children abroad, or putting them in the charge of foreign governesses, in order that they may learn to speak German and French in childhood. The accomplishment acquired with such ease by the little ones goes just as easily as it came when the opportunity for constant practice is withdrawn. The plan is a good one where the circumstances are such that one will have through life constant need and occasion to make use of the accomplishment acquired thus in infancy. Such circumstances exist in numerous European countries. For the graduates of our schools and colleges, however, circumstances of that kind do not exist. Even if we could in the schools accomplish far more than we really can in the way of imparting conversational ability, it would still not be worth while to make that our chief aim, since we should be perfectly sure that in a few years after leaving school our graduates would lose through lack of practice the accomplishment so laboriously acquired. It is, of course, no objection to a study that the learner is going to forget it, provided that the study has in itself an educational value, or lays a foundation upon which the learner can build further all through his after-life. If he fails to build, that is his own fault, and not that of his teacher or of his schooling. If he forgets what he knew after having once got an educational value out of it, what of it? Let him forget it. His forgetting is no sign that his former study was thrown away. There is a good deal of nonsense talked and written on that subject. But if the thing learned is without educational value in itself, is an accomplishment, a *technique* of the fingers or of the vocal organs, then it is obviously a very grave objection to the teaching of it, if we know that the learner will soon forget it through lack of practice. Who would think it good policy to go to the trouble and expense of teaching our students telegraphy or type-setting if it were certain that nine-tenths of them would soon forget the acquisition through lack of practice?

I conclude, then, that the educational value of learning to speak a foreign language is of itself very small. There can, however, be no doubt that language-study is one of the most potent educational instruments we know anything about. How is this? Where does this value lie, if not in learning to speak the language? Why, it lies in learning to read it. It lies in the deepening and broadening of the mind that come from the introduction to a new literature. It lies in the gradual working of one's way into the intellectual life of another people. It lies in the gradual taking up into one's own being of what has been thought and felt by the greatest of other lands and of other days. Or, along another line, it lies in the scientific study of the language itself, in the consequent training of the reason, of the powers of observation, comparison, and synthesis; in short, in the up-building and strengthening of the scientific intellect. There are hundreds of thousands of people in the world to-day who cannot converse at all in German, in French, in Latin, or in Greek, but whose intellectual debt to one or all of these languages is nevertheless simply inestimable. For myself, I can say with perfect sincerity that I look upon my own ability to speak German simply as an accomplishment to which I attach no great importance. If such a thing were possible I would sell it for money, and use the money to buy German books with; and it would not take an exorbitant price to buy it either. But, on the other hand, what I have got from my ability to read German, that is, my debt to the German genius through the German language, I would no more part with than I would part with my memories of the past, my hopes for the future, or any other integral portion of my soul.

Such being my views with regard to language-study and the source of its value, my views as to methods of teaching a language will follow of themselves. The teaching of a modern or of an ancient language in school or college should be thorough and scientific. It should have as its aim to acquaint

the learner with and fix in his mind the fundamental facts of the language and to introduce him to its literature. In this way a foundation will be laid for an acquirement which the learner can go on perfecting and making more and more useful to himself through all his after-life. He can be perfecting it not simply when he has a foreigner to talk with and to bore, but by himself in the privacy of home, wherever and whenever he can get a book to read. In the laying of this foundation a certain amount of colloquial practice is desirable. There are some things about a language that are needful to learn which can really be learned better and faster in this way than in any other. It is well to give some time to the memorizing of phrases, sentences, and idiomatic peculiarities, and to afford oral practice in the proper use of these. In no other way is a true feeling for the language, a proper *Sprachgefühl*, to be acquired. But this work should not be a mere empirical imitation of the teacher or of the book. It should appeal to the learner's intellect, as well as store his memory and discipline his vocal organs. Especially should it be treated not as itself the end of study but as a means to an end, that end being linguistic and literary scholarship.

READING IN MODERN LANGUAGE STUDY.[1]

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It is with extreme diffidence that I offer to read a paper before this Association. My own teaching is done under conditions of such disadvantage, with students so poorly prepared and with results so unsatisfactory, that I cannot but feel how presumptuous it would be in me to attempt here to teach those who themselves teach under so much happier conditions and to so much better purpose than I can do. My sole apology might be an experience which, covering now three decades of language-teaching, has passed through many phases, both of our professional activity at large and of my own individual work. But these phases, for myself personally, have been rather renewals of effort and of disappointment than landmarks of progress or of triumph; and this experience, if I could recount it, might serve rather as a warning than as an example. So that it is as a seeker rather than as a giver that I come, to share my counsel with my more favored brethren; in order that by the confession of my own shortcomings, and especially by the criticism and discussion which this paper may elicit, I may be helped, and so perchance may help others, to find "the better way."

I am conscious, too, that my argument is addressed not so much to the members of this Association, who surely need no advice from me, as to a wider circle of humbler teachers who

[1] Read before the Modern Language Association of America, 1889, and reprinted with the permission of the author.

may be reached and perchance helped through this agency; as from the mountain-tops may be flashed beacon-lights to those who are laboring in the valleys below. I therefore recognize the fitness of the reference of this paper to the Pedagogical Section, which I hope may more and more engage hereafter the attention and sympathy of the Association.

In the stormier days of a controversy now happily abated, we have often heard the reproach made — some of us perhaps in our "fighting moods" have made it ourselves — against our brethren, the classical teachers, that the great majority of graduates wholly forget their Greek and Latin in after-life. Now, it might be answered that so ungracious a charge carries with it its own refutation. What a man has not learned he cannot unlearn, nor can he forget what he has never got. And if, under any old-time method of classical teaching, students did not learn Greek and Latin, but only learned *about them*, it is not strange that they should not know, or use, or love, these languages in later life. Yet, after all, and at the worst, this charge, if true, would not prove that the methods of even such classical study had failed to confer discipline and culture of life-long benefit, even when the Latin inflections, or the Greek alphabet itself, had been entirely forgotten. A far more serious matter it would be, however, if such a charge could be established against our modern languages. For, apart from all questions of method or of relative value in education, the modern languages, it seems, should at least be more *vital* — I mean in closer relation to our actual life; at least comparatively more for *use*, and less for discipline only; for the creation of new instruments of active power rather than for the mere training of faculty; for the manifold needs of a living present rather than for even the highest communion with the past. And if, under all these advantages, a like charge could be sustained against our department, it would be a far more serious imputation upon the value of our work, or at least upon the methods of our teaching.

Now it is precisely this charge which I find myself compelled to make, against myself at least, if not against others. I am fully aware of the disadvantages of my own teaching, and of the shortcomings of my own effort and performance; yet I cannot believe my experience to be wholly exceptional. Let me ask you to do as I have done again and again, to my sorrow. Try your graduates of five, ten, fifteen years ago. Ask them, as you meet them at commencement or elsewhere, how many, outside of professional scholars, "keep up" their French and German? How many still read these languages? How many love to read them, or would not prefer even a poor translation? How many use them as instruments of research or information? Into how many lives have they entered as an abiding presence of sweetness and light, the perpetual heritage of a new birth of intellectual liberty and power? Or, by how many have they been disused, laid aside, forgotten; or used only to read a chance quotation, and remembered only as associated with college tasks and the fading "dream of things that were"?

This is a hard question — here perhaps an ungracious, and for me, it may be, an impertinent one. But I have been asking it for many years, and without gratifying answer. I want my colleagues to ask it, — if not of their graduates, at least to themselves; and to all who can answer "Not guilty," the argument of this paper does not apply. Yet, I regret to say, I fear that the great majority of all our graduates lay aside and forget their modern languages, after graduation, to a degree only less complete because these are perhaps less easy to forget, than do classical students lay aside and forget their Greek and Latin.

Now if this is true, even in any large degree, why is it true? The answer I believe is the same in both cases: because, instead of teaching modern languages, we spend so much of the limited time allowed us *in teaching only about them*, or in the unprofitable pursuit of false objects by false

methods; and thus, like the dog in the stream, snatching at the shadow, we lose the substance and the shadow too.

Whatever diverse views may be maintained as to the varied benefits of classical study, it will surely be admitted that the chief object of the study, say of French and German, is *to know French and German;* and that, for the vast majority of all our students, the chief object of knowing them is *to read them.*

I do not here include private instruction for special purposes or under special circumstances, but only such instruction as, seeking "the greatest good of the greatest number," should be regularly offered in the organized classes of our higher institutions of learning. And of this, too, I speak only within what may be called strictly collegiate limits, meaning thereby, in a word, such study as is *general* for large classes within definite courses, and not including the higher special — or more strictly university — study, whose highest law is *liberty.*

Now, it seems scarcely to need argument, that for this "greatest number" of all our modern language students, in school or college, the "greatest good" that our teaching can confer is the *power to read,* with — so far as possible — the *love of reading.* I think this is sufficiently indicated in the definition adopted by this Association, of the "primary aims" of such instruction: first, "literary culture;" and then, "philological scholarship and linguistic discipline." My contention is, that that which is here placed first is not only first, but is by far the most important, and should have far more attention, relatively, than I believe it now usually receives.

What is the kind of reading which this "literary culture" implies? In the first place, it must be accurate reading; for without accuracy there can be no thorough intelligence and, of course, no genuine literary culture. And this accuracy implies sound grammatical knowledge, and precise, often minute, grammatical criticism. But beyond that, and far beyond

that, it must be reading which by practice has grown to be not only intelligent, accurate, appreciative, but easy and pleasurable: it must be "Reading without Tears." That literature which must be spelled out with grammar and dictionary is, for the nonce, not literature at all; and will surely not be read, after graduation, outside of professional circles. My point is, *we do not read enough:* it is not quality, but quantity; not depth, but range; not knowledge only, but the ease of practised habit, that is left lacking in our results. Speaking not from my own unsatisfactory experience only, but judging so far as I can from the courses outlined in many of our foremost institutions, we do not read enough, not nearly enough, to secure that easy command of the foreign idiom and vocabulary, that comfortable at-homeness in the foreign atmosphere, which is necessary for the appreciation of style, for the enjoyment of literature, or for the free and glad use of these languages as instruments of research, of culture, or of power in after life. Hence it follows that in the modern languages, as in Greek and Latin, yet with far more lamentable loss, reading is, after graduation, for the most part abandoned and forgotten; and French and German, begun in school and continued in college as *tasks*, are remembered and avoided as tasks in after-life. That reading, I repeat, which must be done as a task, or with any distinct consciousness of the difficulty of a foreign idiom, will not be done at all, outside of professional objects. And so it is that the French and German literatures, with all their wealth, all their "promise and potency" of culture, of delight, of inspiration, of power, remain a dead letter in the lives of the vast majority of all our college graduates. If this is not true, I fain would be corrected; but I fear it is only too true.

If, then, this is true, the remedy is that we must read more, and give more prominence to reading, relatively, in our courses of study. And if this be recognized as the supremely important object to which all others are secondary, we must, per-

force, within our limited time, subordinate other objects to which large proportions of time and attention, though of course in varying degrees, are now habitually devoted. Among them I will briefly mention: —

I. THE FORMAL STUDY OF GRAMMAR.

This cannot, of course, be wholly eliminated, but it should be reduced to a minimum. The grammar should be for the reading, not the reading for the grammar. Reading outside of grammar should be begun at the earliest possible day, with all needful helps; and the further accretion of grammatical knowledge should be made to crystallize gradually around easy, interesting, and pleasurable reading. The formal learning of paradigms and rules may thus, I believe, be wholly omitted, except in largest outlines. Nothing *vitalizes* language study like reading, even the simplest, outside of grammar rules. I remember a boy who, after a year of grammatical study of Latin on the old plan in school, came during vacation under the teaching of his sister, a bright Virginia girl, who knew nothing of the scholastic method: before the end of the first week he exclaimed, "Golly, sister! I believe this means something" — a commentary only too true upon much of our grammar grinding. If I might add a word of personal experience, it would be that year by year, though yet far from attaining my ideal, I am more and more impressed with the importance of *minimizing* formal grammar study. One month of indispensable introduction I believe to be quite sufficient. After that, so far as possible, the grammar, like the dictionary, should be used as a book of reference rather than of formal study. (I might add, that the best grammars for this kind of work remain yet to be written.) The reading, thus early begun, should be pushed more and more; the formal grammar, more and more subordinated. I should not need to add that at this stage all points of technical learning, — etymology, language-history, etc., except for occasional *help*, should

be wholly omitted. Yet right here lies our temptation. It is so easy to waste time in displaying our own erudition; so pleasant to astonish or amuse our pupils; so hard to forget ourselves for their sake: so easy, in a word, to be a scholar, so hard to be a teacher!

II. EXERCISES IN SPEAKING.

On this point I shall say but little. I fear I shall in some quarters be deemed guilty of high treason if I express my conviction of the utter worthlessness of such exercises in our ordinary college work. Of course, along with the tongue, the ear must be trained to an accurate pronunciation, and to the appreciation of the beauty and rhythm of the original; for without this there is no language, much less literature. It is important, also, to be able to understand what may be added, for illustration or explanation, in the original tongue. But as for learning to speak in the college class-room, the idea is futile, and all the time devoted thereto is almost utterly wasted. Given a class, say of twenty-five to thirty members, with three or four hours a week, — that is five or ten minutes for each individual, — and all, meanwhile, reading, writing, speaking, thinking, dreaming English for all the remaining hours of day or night, and their power of intelligent speech in French or German would be trivial and futile, less than "a younger brother's revenue," even if every moment of time throughout the college course could be devoted to such exercises, to the exclusion of all other instruction. The result would be to leave the student, in the language of Professor Hewitt, "the proud possessor of a few sentences, but without any literary knowledge;" or, as I have myself elsewhere said, "with one phrase on almost every subject, and hardly two on any." Whatever may be said for the so-called "natural method" with individual pupils, or in private classes taught under special conditions for special objects (and here its merits may be great), yet for collegiate or even school work

proper it is "a delusion and a snare." Who among us has not witnessed the helplessness of pupils trained by this method for all literary or higher linguistic work? The conditions necessary for its usefulness are simply not practicable in the ordinary classes of the school or college.

III. WRITTEN COMPOSITION.

Here the weight of prescription and of authority would seem to be so overwhelming as to render criticism at once impotent if not impertinent. Yet we should not forget that this prescription comes to us through the Latin, and from an age when the writing of Latin was the necessary accomplishment of every educated person; nor that it is now less than a generation since the like prescription in England still insisted upon the writing of Latin *verse:* so hard it is to lay aside the leading-strings of a past culture, even after we have outgrown its infancy. I would not question the indispensableness of writing to the mastery, or indeed even to the accurate criticism, of language; still less would I claim that the highest scholarship in French or German could be attained without the ability to write, or even to speak, these languages. Yet for how many of us does this "highest scholarship" come within the remotest horizon of our teaching? How many of all our pupils do we expect to learn, by our exercises, to write French and German with any true command of language, much less of style; or, indeed, with anything beyond the most barren grammatical correctness? But even within this limit, and far short of any real power of expression, all must admit the value of writing to confirm the knowledge and use of the grammatical forms; to teach the force of words, the value of position, structure, emphasis, etc.: so that, even for thorough grammatical training, exercise in writing — I will not say *composition* — may fairly be claimed to be indispensable. This I do not deny; my protest is against the abuse, not the use, of this exercise.

I insist, *first*, that it is begun too early. To set a pupil to writing Latin or German who knows nothing of reading is as unnatural and cruel as it is unprofitable. It reverses the natural order of acquisition, and makes the beginner's path, which should be lightened by every helpful device, literally a pathway of tears. Such exercise should be reserved until by actual use the student has acquired some considerable knowledge of word-form, structure, and idiom; or, at the very least, until a review, after the first study of the grammar. Then, as my boy said above, it may "mean something," and so become really intelligent and helpful.

Secondly, I contend that it is often made unduly difficult and burdensome, not only by being too early begun, but by being exaggerated beyond its proper importance, as though it were an end unto itself, instead of being regarded — what it really should be — as a help to easier and more accurate reading.[1] At present I think I do not exaggerate when I say that this exercise is generally made to occupy from one-third to one-half, often even more, of the time given to the study of language, ancient or modern; and that by unreasonable methods of instruction and of correction it is made also, to both pupil and teacher, by far the most painful and discouraging as well as unprofitable part of the work. It would be a great gain for progress, as well as for peace and comfort, if this exercise could be restricted within narrower limits of time, and placed in its due subordination to the higher objects of reading and criticism. To a very large extent, indeed, its purposes can be better accomplished, with less loss of time, by writing from *oral dictation* — which gives, besides, the needful training of the ear, as of the attention, for the understand-

1 I beg leave here to refer to the excellent essay of Professor Hale of the University of Chicago, on "The Art of Reading Latin" (Ginn & Co.), which, though intended for classical teachers only, may be almost equally helpful in the teaching of modern languages. I make this reference the more freely because I cannot fully claim the weight of this high authority in favor of all the points of the present paragraph.

ing of the spoken language. The time that may here be saved, in my opinion without loss, should also be devoted to the supreme object of more and better reading. Indeed, I will go further, and venture to add that, in courses which are necessarily elementary in scope, it would be a wise economy to omit composition altogether.

IV. SUBJECTS OF HIGHER OR SPECIAL STUDY.

The foregoing remarks include subjects and methods appropriate mainly to the school and the lower classes of the college. What I shall now briefly add concerns rather the higher or university study. I refer to those subjects which I suppose to be included by this Association in its definition, — "philological scholarship and linguistic discipline," in addition to "literary culture." Under these heads may perhaps be roughly enumerated: scientific grammar, phonetics, etymology, special and comparative, language-history, with study of older forms and kindred dialects, textual criticism, the details of literary history, and so forth. Let no one suppose that I undervalue the importance of these things, however much I may regret my own shortcomings in the learning or teaching of them. They are the crown of our discipline, giving to it the dignity of a many-sided and ample science, and touching at many points the highest intellectual and moral interests of man. My only contention is, that these should be mainly reserved for that higher study which should be made rather the privilege of the few than the task of the many; for the higher classes only, in our collegiate work; more properly and more largely for post-graduate or university students: best of all, for that *seminary* work so admirably outlined by Professor White of Cornell at Philadelphia in 1887, yet which I do not believe to be practicable, or even desirable, within ordinary collegiate limits. The scope of the subjects here included is so large and so important that they press with overwhelming weight upon lower classes, not yet

fully prepared for such study; and for this very reason there is danger lest they should prematurely usurp the lion's share of that limited and precious time now available for our courses. Such topics — of more distinctly scientific import, linguistic or philological — should, therefore, be mainly reserved for later study, or introduced into the earlier by glimpses only; for illumination and inspiration, rather than as an added burden of work. I make this plea, as I think, in the interest alike of the higher and of the lower study; to leave the latter free for the pursuit of its immediate and more important object, and to secure for the former the groundwork of an adequate preparation. The premature or excessive introduction of these topics into early study is one of the most dangerous temptations of our scholarship, and is, in my opinion, the chief reason why so many of our students leave college not only unable to read French and German with any intelligent appreciation or pleasure, but already wearied and alienated by such a mistaken study not of, but about them.[1] Such students are little likely to return to these languages with any zest in later life.

I claim, then, that far more largely than is now usually the case, the chief work of our school and college courses in modern languages should be reading, — large, intelligent, pleasurable, sympathetic reading (which must, of course, also be

1 It is certainly true, as urged by the *Nation* in its review of President Lowell's address before this Association, that literature and language are equally worthy objects of study, and indeed, in their highest conception, are *one*. But this does not touch the argument of the present paper, which concerns only the relative weight that should be assigned to each in the (purely preparatory) work of the great body of our students. It is also true, as stated in another column of the same issue of the *Nation*, that the great mass of college graduates do not keep up the reading even of good *English* literature, — as, indeed, they do not keep up any branch of college study. But this is because they do not choose to do so, not because they cannot; they at least use English books for all needed purposes of help or information. I contend that they do not as a rule, even to this extent, use French or German, — and because they *cannot* — at least except as a difficult and disagreeable task. The question here is, moreover, something more than one of degree only.

careful and accurate reading); and that our chief object should be, for this main body of our students, to endow them with the power so to read these languages that they shall love to read them, not as a task but as a privilege, and with the delight of literary insight and sympathy, for all the uses of culture and of service, as they would read their mother tongue. And in order to impart this power, and, when possible, to kindle this love, I contend that, just so far as may be necessary, all other objects or methods should be subordinated. How far such subordination may be necessary is, of course, a question of circumstances and conditions, for which I should be the last to propose any unvarying rule. Such questions of practical pedagogy, like all other questions of intellectual or moral duty, are at last *personal* questions, which every man must decide for himself.

Finally, as to the method of this reading, believing that in details each man must make his own methods, I will only remark that it should be, first, *for translation.* It is vain to decry this exercise, which is one of the most valuable in the whole range of education. Translation, clear, accurate, simple, adequate yet idiomatic, is not only the best test of the knowledge of both idioms, but it is a work of art as well as of science (and, as our President has said, of *conscience* too), disciplining the highest powers of insight, skill, and taste, both in thought and in expression. As a training in the mother tongue, it is superior to all the devices of rhetoric. President Eliot has somewhere said, though in other and better words, that the power rightly to understand and to use the mother tongue is the consummate flower of all education. So we should not debar our study of modern languages from this high ministry, for which it is so conspicuously fitted. There is no other discipline incident to language-study so valuable as translation rightly conceived; yet there is nothing more harmful than those miserable verbal paraphrases which, under the utterly false name of "literal translation,"

are so often not only allowed but required.[1] Such method is false alike to the foreign and to the native language. Only *idiom* can translate *idiom*, or *style* translate *style*. And if it be urged that no translation can be fully adequate, I answer that no otherwise can this truth be so sharply taught, or so deeply felt, as by the effort to reproduce the perfect forms of a foreign literature in our own language: —it is only by doing *our best* that we can truly conceive the ideal and the unattainable. We must insist, also, that for this American people there is only one mother tongue, to which all other languages are alike foreign, and to be studied as such, by its norms, and largely, too, for its sake. It were better that our students should never know other languages than use them to debauch their English. I insist, then, upon the prime necessity and value of good translation, within appropriate limits.

But, secondly, it is equally clear that our students should, finally, learn to read *without translation*. No one has ever truly *read* any foreign literature who has read it only through a translation — his own or any other. At best such reading is only at second hand, and, in the work of our students, is usually very imperfect. Translation is essential at first, as is the scaffolding to the building of a house; but no house is finished or sightly until the scaffolding is removed. So, no reading is adequate until it can be understood at first hand, and in the form of the original. In other words, the student must learn to think and to feel, if not productively, at least receptively, in and through the foreign language. Then only can he truly know or feel its literature. How this transformation shall be accomplished, at what stage begun, by

[1] Since the above was written, I have seen an amusing description of an old-time teacher who, in the lines of Horace, Epod. II., 31: —

> "Aut trudit acres hinc et hinc multa cane
> Apros in obstantes plagas,"

insisted that *multa cane* should be rendered (literally!) *with much dog*. Some of my colleagues in the Association may be surprised to learn that this style is by no means yet confined to the "rural districts."

what methods promoted, is one of the most important questions of our pedagogy.[1] Suffice it to say, that it implies a new birth of intellectual power, and that without it the best results of language-study are impossible.

What to read was twenty to thirty years ago a question of supply. Now, thanks to the intelligent zeal of our publishers, it is a question of selection. Such selection might, however, be much aided, for remote and less-experienced teachers, if the publishers' catalogues gave generally, as is already done in some cases, a careful description of the *kind* of each edition; whether for primary, intermediate, or advanced work. Besides this there is only one remark of so general application as to justify mention here. This is, that beyond books intended for the very earliest use, editions with vocabularies, except such as are special or technological, are not to be commended. These vocabularies, unless very elaborate, and then expensive, are apt to be incomplete, or at least limited in scope. But even the best is only a poor substitute for a good dictionary, the essential feature being, usually, that the student is helped to the required meaning, instead of having to select it for himself. Such spoon-diet is proper only as "milk for babes." Beyond babyhood, the student should be trained to the right use of the dictionary, as well as of the grammar and other sources of information. This remark has seemed to be justified here by the increasing number of such *labor-saving* editions "with vocabulary."

And now, having detained you already too long, I ask to be indulged in a few words more. During more than twenty years of active work as a teacher of modern languages, I have seen our profession pass through many phases. At first we were fighting for a bare recognition in the scheme of liberal study. This victory won, we had then to witness the war of

[1] Again I take the liberty of referring to Professor Hale's "Essay on the Art of Reading Latin," which I most gladly commend to all teachers of modern language.

"methods," until we are now, I trust, happily past that stage of our progress. As I review the scene of so much discussion and experiment, and look forward to the bright promise of the new day, which I have lived to welcome, if not to enjoy, there seem to me to be two tendencies — two remaining perils — on which I may be permitted to add a word of experience and of warning. The first is the *bread-and-butter* theory. This, I hope, may be here briefly dismissed. Bread is indispensable, and butter, however thin, is to most of us a very acceptable addition. But these are not recognized by this Association, and should not be recognized by ourselves professionally, as among the primary and direct objects of our work. However the learning of modern languages may be made to serve this necessary and worthy purpose in private classes, in summer schools, or under other arrangements for special objects, we must see to it that such views shall not usurp a leading place in our institutions of higher learning. In the purview of our teaching, the life must be more than meat, and the body more than raiment. On this point, I am sure, it is not necessary here to insist.

The danger which I more fear, just now, comes from the opposite direction — from the excess of what I cannot better describe than as *erudition in the school room.* I refer to the tendency — I fear, the growing tendency — to obtrude the methods and requirements of erudite or special study into our elementary teaching and text-books. This may be at present only a wholesome reaction from former more trivial methods — the lustiness of a giant only lately liberated from chains; but it indicates a peril which, if not arrested by sound reason, will be hurtful alike to the thoroughness and to the modesty of true scholarship. The field of this danger lies less within the scope of this Association than in the lower schools; but the warning, if at all justified, is not the less appropriate here, because to the members of this Association the humbler teachers will naturally look for the standards as well as the instru-

ments of their work. The time was, and not very long ago, when we made this reproach against the classicists. Yet now, by strange reaction, we see them seeking, more and more, better and more reasonable methods, and producing easier and more teachable text-books; while we, on our part, seem to be hastening to occupy the cloudy eminence which they are wisely trying to vacate. In this tendency I see a real danger to modern language study. In the pride of a triumphant scholarship we forget the requirements of a reasonable pedagogy; or, from the standpoint of another native tongue, we forget or ignore the needs of the English pupil; — or we fail clearly to draw the line between the critical work of the advanced student and the wants of the untrained beginner. I see these indications in some of our modern books; and I must infer that they exist also in many of our class-rooms. I do not by any means despise erudition, or critical scholarship, or critical teaching; but they have their place, as they have their value. We must draw the line clearly and broadly, in our editing as well as in our teaching, between advanced and elementary work; or we shall soon have no good school books, and no good schools. If by the premature and injudicious obtrusion of learned methods or results we make the beginnings of modern language study harsh and repulsive, we shall undermine the foundations of our discipline, and shall then vainly attempt to build any worthy superstructure. Let us resist the temptations of intellectual pride. Let us remember that in teaching, if anywhere, *ars est celare artem;* — that the highest triumph of erudition, in the school book or in the school room, is in the most masterful helpfulness; and that he who would lead the children of knowledge, as of faith, must himself become as a little child.

THE NATURAL METHOD.[1]

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THE advocates of the "natural" method of teaching modern languages have apparently captured the citadel of the argument by the name which they have chosen for their system, and the question arises, — What is the natural method of teaching or acquiring language?

The answer is: "Learn a language as a child learns its mother tongue." If this statement embodies the essence of this mode of instruction, we must ask what is the process by which a child learns to speak? It is surrounded by the speech of its country. There is no blurring or obscuring of impressions: one sound and only one is associated with every object or action. The child assigns a certain meaning to a tone of the voice before it knows a single word. By the application of certain sounds to particular things it learns the names of persons and of objects. By repetition memory fixes the sound as the representative of an idea. Words of description introduce the notion of quality, of good and bad, of color, heat, and size. Verbs of incomplete predication, and picture-words, give the idea of actions, and the relations of substance and quality. The conception of time follows, and adverbs indicate the mode of verbal action. Nouns as the objects of verbs and prepositions follow. The child passes from the generic to the specific, from applying a single term to all animals, to discriminating the characteristics of each.

[1] Reprinted from the *Academy*, Dec. 1886, with the permission of the publisher.

Terms descriptive of physical objects are broadened in meaning to have a secondary and spiritual signification. Many expressions in the vocabulary of both the child and the man have been learned without even truly analyzing them. Stereotyped, hereditary forms are adopted without any conscious mental action. This is, in brief, the process of the child's development in language in its own home and country. But the condition of pupils who begin the study of a foreign language in this country is different. They already possess a vocabulary fixed in the memory; every word suggests at once an object or action or quality. The mind is full of the images of things. The steps of the child's development cannot be repeated exactly in later study. The process must be different, — new names must be associated with familiar things; terms in part arbitrary and in part natural must be acquired, so that they come at command at the sight of the object; or kindred words in a changed form must be learned. The child must at the same time retain and constantly use all its former store of words. It cannot be transported into a foreign world for more than an hour or two a day, or a few hours a week. The years through which a child grows into the life and spirit of its mother tongue, attaining even then but a limited vocabulary, cannot be repeated. More rapid results are possible, and methods corresponding to the awakened powers of the child must be employed.

The "natural" method, strictly followed, would require that all instruction should be oral, by objects and by forms presented to the eye. But in advanced instruction we cannot stop here; other methods must be employed to keep pace with the mind's expansion and its developed powers. We should ignore most important methods of training in use in the acquisition of other branches of knowledge, if we stopped with the oral, or "natural" method. That method is alone natural which takes cognizance of a pupil's surroundings, his purposes in life, his object in acquiring the language, and his

intellectual capabilities in learning. The mind generalizes; the principles of language admit of condensed statement; the facts must be grouped in rules which enunciate the usages of the language, if they are to be retained. Systematic grammar is necessary, and language must be studied as the embodiment of thought, the philosophy of expression, in order to secure the highest culture. The mode in which a thought is conceived, the subtle influence of particles, prefixes, and suffixes, must form a part of the training in language. Language thus studied affords a valuable discipline, and indirectly prepares the way for the study of logic and philosophy.

What is natural at one period of life is not natural, in the sense of being adapted, to all periods of study. The scholar of disciplined mind who seeks to master a language by the natural method alone, would make limited progress. The gift of generalization, of comparison of forms, and of insight into kindred words, would be sacrificed by adopting the method of the child. The scientific method of teaching language requires that all the powers should be enlisted in the work. Hence any exclusive system will fail to accomplish the highest results, and will overlook essential facts of intellectual growth. That method which evokes all the powers of the pupil's mind is the best; the ear, the voice, and the eye must alike be taught, and this triple object must be kept in view throughout the course. Analogy is a suggestive and ever-active principle in the acquisition of language; and a knowledge of related words, inflections, and principles in one language facilitates the mastery of every other. A knowledge of Latin is a key to the attainment of all the Romance languages; but only a clear and comprehensive knowledge of its words and forms will facilitate an acquaintance with the derivative tongues. A superficial, speaking knowledge of German does not contribute to the knowledge of Anglo-Saxon and of English speech, while a scientific knowledge is a most valuable aid. A defect of the so-called "natural" method is

that it appeals to the memory exclusively, and, unless supplemented by other methods, leaves the student with a bare knowledge of the idioms taught, but destitute of the principles and analogies of the language, beyond those imparted by oral practice. Students so taught are often deficient in a systematic knowledge of the inflections, and their subsequent progress is less thorough than that of pupils who have been trained by established methods.

The culture of the memory alone never made a great scholar: a knowledge of several languages learned familiarly where they are spoken, fails in itself to give intellectual culture. The knowledge of German possessed by the children of German parents, born in this country, is often an obstacle to the thorough study of their native tongue. A facility in phrases is often accompanied by a real failure to discriminate properly the meaning of words in English. Those delicate distinctions in thought existing in a language are often lost in the case of students to whom both languages are alike. One language seems to displace the other, as Hamerton holds, and to make the possessor insensible to subtle shades of meaning. Even in the case of great scholars who seem to know equally the language and literature of two nations, the idioms of one language are often transferred unconsciously to the other. If we examine the results achieved by American students who have resided abroad, we are confirmed in our view of the limited value of the acquisition of a language mainly by intercourse, without thorough systematic study. Many who have taken a degree at a foreign university, and mingled intimately with the people, but who have devoted themselves to pursuits other than the language itself, have acquired only an uncertain facility in speaking and writing. If this is the case with students who have resided abroad, being daily in a foreign atmosphere, hearing in lectures and conversation only the language of the country, it is true by a stronger reasoning of pupils in this country who enjoy but an hour or two of

instruction per day in a foreign language, and speak and write and think the remainder of the time in English. Students study the modern languages mainly for an acquaintance with the literature; the time which can be devoted to it is limited. If all the available time were consumed in studying by the oral method, a knowledge of the literature, and the discipline which comes from thorough study of the language, would be lost. A teacher who employed exclusively the oral method would fail to call into exercise some of the highest powers of the pupil, and the results would be meagre and unsatisfying. The oral method should be assigned to its true place. It is an important and valuable aid in training the ear to understand the spoken language, and the organs of speech to pronounce correctly. Translation at hearing is an admirable accompaniment of linguistic instruction, and should be practised constantly in the study of language. If familiar explanations and lectures in the language itself are given, it will form a useful auxiliary to any course.

It is fallacious to hope to impart to all students the ability to speak a foreign language fluently. Few would have occasion to use the language if acquired. It is therefore unwise to insist upon a speaking knowledge as the end of the study. It is a valuable aid in the mastery of grammatical forms, and a key to a facile acquaintance with the literature. Indeed, a true appreciation of poetry, as well as its expression, is impossible without the *feeling* which comes from an inner knowledge of the spirit as well as of the sounds of the language.

The manifest merit of the natural method should not be obscured by the exclusive claim that it is a substitute for, and should displace other recognized and approved systems of instruction. As an accompaniment of higher study, it will perform a useful and possibly indispensable office.

These notes are simply what they are called, — notes of the writer's experience in teaching French. The methods suggested for the various parts of the work may not be the best; they can certainly be improved on; but they have proved fruitful of good results, and have been adopted by some other teachers with equal success.

NOTES ON THE TEACHING OF FRENCH.

BY PROFESSOR F. C. DE SUMICHRAST, HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

IN GENERAL; THE TEACHER; PRONUNCIATION; GROUND-WORK; SIGHT-READING; COMPOSITION; MEMORIZING; DICTATION; SPEAKING FRENCH; CONVERSATION CLASSES; CLASSIC WRITERS.

IN GENERAL.

FEW changes in education are more striking than the growth and development of the study of modern languages. The time has long since gone by when Latin was practically the only medium of intercommunication between learned men in different branches of knowledge; when philosophers, theologians, and scientists made use of the language of Cicero to communicate to each other their discoveries or their opinions. A common language does not at present exist; whether it ever will do so is a question which may be left out of consideration for the moment. It is plain that, with the strong patriotic feeling exhibited by the great nations of the world, neither English, German, nor French will be universally accepted as the language of general intercourse. A student of the present day who desires to be thoroughly equipped, must therefore possess more than an elementary knowledge; he must have a good command of those foreign languages in which so many and so valuable works have been and are being produced.

This alone, to say nothing of the splendor of French literature in past centuries, must compel attention to the importance

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of the methods employed in teaching the language. The old system of spending a very long time in picking out, word by word, the sense of a short passage, selected generally from a somewhat tedious and uninteresting work, — tedious and uninteresting precisely because it was not studied or treated in the way that its merits demanded, — could not possibly induce men to pursue their studies with anything like the enthusiasm that must be excited if rapid and satisfactory progress is to be made.

To know French, — and in these notes it is French simply that will be treated of, — to know French is not simply to be acquainted with the elements of the grammar, and to have read, with more or less trouble and difficulty, one or two texts selected from the many treasures which the literature of France possesses; but it is to have a real acquaintance with the genius and forms of the language; to penetrate into the spirit of the literature; to become familiar with the modes of thought and the manner of expressing them; to feel, in a word, that instead of a hesitating progress, such as that of a child tottering in his walk, one's onward march is firm and decided as that of the grown man who presses forward to a distinct, clearly defined goal.

There are, broadly speaking, two ways in which the study of the French language may be conducted. The one which has just been alluded to consists in minute and over-careful attention to every detail from the very outset, demanding an accurate comprehension of every point as it comes up. This method assumes that in the acquisition of the French language the intellect is capable of doing what it absolutely refuses to do in any other branch of knowledge. In none would it find it possible to grasp at once, fully and completely, and to retain permanently, every detail as it presents itself.

The other method is intended to lead the student to an acquaintance with the language, such as that of the child when

it first begins to learn words, to distinguish things, and to give them names. The idea which underlies this theory is a captivating one. Its very simplicity attracts sympathy and approval, and at first sight it seems as though it were the one right and proper mode of imparting a knowledge of the French tongue in a manner which will be at once agreeable and effectual. It is not, however, capable of fulfilling all that is claimed for or expected of it. The child learning to lisp its own mother tongue is a different being intellectually from the student whose mind has been more or less thoroughly trained, and who is capable of very much greater effort; who understands the value of time; who is anxious to progress; who wishes to become master of the language in as short a time as possible.

Any system which aims at thorough teaching of French, which seeks to combine simplicity of method with accuracy of knowledge and rapidity of grasp, cannot leave out of sight the facts that the grammar bears a most important relation to the language; that the literature is, after all, the one great treasure-house which must be opened to the student; that the best teachers will be the great writers, classical and modern; that the student's vocabulary will be most usefully and most rapidly enlarged by the perusal of numerous works by the best authors.

Another point is, that precisely the same course cannot be followed in its entirety with every learner. Purposes are different. Some may wish to acquire simply reading knowledge; others to add to this some slight conversational facility, to be developed subsequently by residence in France, or intercourse with French people. Others, again, are anxious to make a thorough study of the language, and to become fully acquainted with its resources and riches.

Taking, then, the grammar as the basis of the work, the question arises, How should that grammar be taught? The use of a text-book becomes a necessity, and of text-books

there is, of course, no end. Admirable grammars in the French language are to be had quite easily. Very good grammars written in English, Methods or Courses of greater or less excellence, to say nothing of the very numerous books which are mere collections of clippings from other works — are ready to the hand; and it would seem as though every possible system had been tried by which an acquisition of the elements of the language might be facilitated. And yet, while recognizing the value of many books which have become standard in educational institutions, teachers and students alike are forced to recognize the fact that of all the grammars or methods published, there is not yet one the author of which has grasped the principle which must underlie any grammatical text-book intended to be used by Americans or Englishmen in the study of French. The general plan of the grammars, properly so called, is simply that on which grammars written for French pupils are constructed. Chapters on the article, the substantive, the adjective, the pronoun, the verb, the adverb, the preposition, the conjunction, and the interjection, follow each other in regular procession, as a preface to that body of rules which, with its not infrequent exceptions, forms the French syntax. The Methods do not, as a rule, conform strictly to this arrangement, although they also begin with that old friend, the article, which, from being placed in the very fore front of the instruction, assumes an importance which certainly should never have belonged to it; a fact so well recognized by students in general, that they very speedily forget all they learned about the combinations of the article and the preposition, and even when far advanced in their studies continue to translate literally "of the" and "to the" by *de le*, *à le*, *de les* and *à les*. A further fault of Methods, probably inseparable from the plan, is that a certain difficulty is experienced in referring to particular rules required to elucidate difficulties which must constantly present themselves to an English-speaking student.

The fact that it is English-speaking people who are to be taught the French language, gives the key to the true method of teaching.

This will be better understood, perhaps, by an illustration taken from actual practice in teaching.

A constant stumbling-block to English-speaking students is the agreement of the article and adjective with the substantive in French. *Theoretically*, the rule is alike in both languages; *practically*, there is nothing in English to show the agreement. In other words, the substantive in French has a *visible* effect upon article and adjective; it has *none* in English. This is an important difference, which must be taught at the outset; and the plan adopted by the writer is as follows: —

On the blackboard are written two English substantives: —

Boy. *Girl.*

and the class informs the teacher that the first is masculine singular, and the second feminine singular.

Below each is then written the French word: —

Garçon. *Fille.*

and the class is then asked to supply a definite article for each noun: —

The boy. *The girl.*

Attention is at once drawn to the fact that the *form* of the article is identical in each case; then the French comes: —

The boy, *The girl,*
Le garçon. *La fille.*

A difference in *form;* impossible to mistake one for the other. Add an adjective, say "good:" —

The good boy. *The good girl.*

No difference in the *form* of the adjective, any more than in that of the article; but note the French: —

The good boy,	*The good girl,*
Le bon garçon.	*La bonne fille.*

Here again the adjective changes its form and clearly indicates the gender.

Now comes number. The rule in both languages is alike: add *s* for the plural (exceptions disregarded at the outset); so: —

Boys,	*Girls,*
Garçons.	*Filles.*

Add first the article and next the adjective, and the English shows no change whatever in these words, although they are plural; but the French plainly indicates difference in gender and number: —

The good boys,	*The good girls,*
Les bons garçons.	*Les bonnes filles.*

The fact can now be, *is* now impressed upon the student that the agreement of the article and the adjective with the substantive means something *visible* in French, — an operation to be performed; a change to be effected. And the lesson is repeated with the possessive adjective, the demonstrative, the interrogative, and, again, with the pronoun, whether personal, possessive, demonstrative, or relative; and the idea sinks into the mind and stays there.

This is not a grammar, or a method either, else it would be proper to show how many points can thus be made clear and striking. Besides, they will readily occur to any one familiar with both tongues and teaching them. The supposedly terrible French "irregular" verb can be stripped of its terrors even more emphatically.

The grammar of the language must be learned in conjunction with as large a number as possible of words in common use, in

order to form a vocabulary by means of which the student will in a comparatively short space of time be enabled not merely to read ordinary French with facility but to translate English into French, and, at no distant time, to express directly in French the thoughts which he wishes to utter. The two languages, English and French, are not only dissimilar in their origin; they are essentially distinct in their genius and modes of expression. What is important in the one is less so in the other. The English-speaking student employs, naturally, the modes of thought and of expression which he has learned from childhood, and these differ so greatly from the French that, unless the fact is borne in mind constantly in the course of teaching, it is not French that will be given, but a bastard dialect which has nothing whatever to recommend it save an occasional quaint turn or absurd mistranslation.

To teach French as it should be taught necessarily involves on the part of the teacher a thorough knowledge of both tongues. How else is he to seize the characteristic points of each, and to present them clearly and definitely, so that they may be readily grasped by the intelligence of his students? The object, then, is to dwell less upon those points of grammar which are alike in the two languages, than to impress strongly the differences, so that the characteristic features of the language will be thoroughly learned, and become part and parcel of the intellectual stock-in-trade of the student, which he can call upon readily at any time without fear of becoming obscure or unintelligible. This is the very basis of successful teaching which aims at bringing on a pupil rapidly, while grounding him thoroughly. Every part of the work may be turned to advantage in this respect; not merely those grammatical exercises which are necessary to impress upon the mind the particular points they illustrate, but such spoken sentences, such ordinary expressions, as may, and indeed should, be used from the outset to accustom the ear and the understanding alike to the different language which it is seeking to acquire.

And also the reading of French itself, which should never be made an unpleasant, ungrateful task, involving an amount of labor which simply destroys any possible interest in the work itself, — not that French, any more than anything else, can be acquired without labor and difficulty; but what is meant is that mere labor for labor's sake should not be allowed to prevail in the system pursued; that it should be definitely kept in view that the work is to bring results encouraging to the student; for no matter how excellent the teacher, how thoroughly equipped, how interesting in his illustrations, how clear and precise in his expressions, it is not he who is to acquire the language, it is not he who can put it into the mind of the learner, but it is that learner who must by his own work make himself the possessor of the stores of knowledge presented to him.

THE TEACHER.

It has been said above that "to teach French as it should be taught necessarily involves on the part of the teacher a thorough knowledge of both tongues." This point is worth considering a little more fully.

Macaulay says, in effect, that no man can ever acquire a foreign language perfectly; experience proves the contrary. It is possible to know two languages thoroughly, and, given a good "ear," to pronounce in both accurately. But perfect pronunciation of the language to be taught is a necessity; one may sin in English, but not in French. Here is a difficulty in the way of American teachers; a serious one. Here is now a difficulty in the way of foreign born teachers, — imperfect knowledge of English, and consequent confusion in explanations given in that tongue.

Which is the better, then, the American or the French born teacher? The odds are now, and always will be, in favor of the latter, provided he knows English well, so as to understand the spirit of the language, and to make plain, quite plain,

his meaning when, perforce, his explanations must be given in English. But if an American has really mastered French, and by a residence abroad has succeeded in speaking it fluently and pronouncing it correctly, he is the equal of the Frenchman for all that part of the work which does not include literature. The spirit of the literature is not to be so easily appropriated.

Too strong a warning can scarcely be given to Frenchmen who, because they know, as the saying is, their mother tongue, imagine they can teach it, and readily seek and obtain positions in which they at least have a chance of learning English, if they do not teach much French. An intelligent knowledge of English is a *requisite*.

But, on the other hand, the fact that a man is an American gives him absolutely no advantage over the foreigner, so far as handling a class goes, or in the placing himself *en rapport* with the students. These gifts do not pertain to any one nationality, and an American may prove a flat failure as well as a foreigner. The only advantage he has, if it be one, is that he can talk English easily; and when troubled with his acquired French can take refuge in that; but the student suffers more retardation in his progress from good English than from good French, and the foreigner can at least talk that.

In brief, the question of nationality has absolutely no business in this matter; personal fitness alone should be the test.

The business of the teacher is strictly that of helper, especially in the beginnings of the study. He can only make plain, but that he must do, whatever presents any difficulty; he can only intelligently discuss whatever points present themselves to his mind or that of the pupils; he can only show how best to attack and solve a particular problem, indicate why certain turns, certain forms, are used in preference to others; he must remove from the minds of the students that very absurd but deep-rooted belief that every foreign language should in all respects conform to the structure of English, and that where

differences occur, as occur of course they must, there is something radically wrong about that foreign language. Whatever is essentially different between the two must be dwelt upon and made absolutely clear. In a word, the teacher must strive from the outset to make the learners understand the genius of the language, and induce them, by every means in his power, to become as familiar as may be with it. This method, if conscientiously, carefully, and diligently pursued, will, in every case, result not only in a rapidity of progress fairly astonishing to adherents of the older methods, but in a much more intimate acquaintance with, and a greater grasp of, the forms peculiar to French than is possible in any other way. This grammatical teaching must be done, as has been observed, not only by intelligent explanation, — repeated as often as is necessary, and that will always be oftener than most teachers think it necessary, — but by careful reading and writing of exercises by the pupils. There is nothing which so firmly impresses a point on the mind as a written exercise upon it, and nothing which will enable the pupil to make satisfactory progress more than attention on the part of the teacher to the correctness of that written work. This, no doubt, involves on his part an amount of labor which, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, will be considered useless drudgery; but it is not: it is a necessary part of the business, which must be done as faithfully as another. It is not showy, it is not interesting perhaps; but it is of the utmost importance that the student should not be permitted to carry away uncorrected work, if by any means within the power of the teacher that work can be made perfect. Besides, every instructor of experience will agree that the mistakes of the students are the helps of the teacher.

A man most thoroughly at home in two or more languages, and such men are by no means rare, may not always recognize at the first glance the peculiar difficulties which a learner has to contend with; what to him is exceedingly simple and plain, may be, and very likely is, exceedingly obscure and difficult to

another; and it is only by constant study of the errors committed by students that the teacher can perfect himself in the work he has undertaken. If, therefore, he avoids the study of those mistakes, whether made in recitation or in written exercises, he voluntarily casts away a most important means of promoting his own success.

PRONUNCIATION.

Reading must, or should, be taken up almost at the beginning, and here, of course, a very grave difficulty presents itself, that of pronunciation. Most grammars and Methods prepared for use in American or British colleges and schools contain a prefatory chapter purporting to give, approximately at all events, the pronunciation of French sounds. No doubt a demand has arisen for some such help to those who are unable to obtain the pronunciation from some one well qualified, but a moment's reflection will show the hopelessness of attempting to learn or teach pronunciation by such means. If all persons were equally trained to speak their own language, English, for instance, correctly and properly, and if, in addition, they all possessed the power of distinguishing differences of sound, which are as marked to the trained ear as difference of notes in music; and if, further, combinations of English letters could always be relied on to give exactly the same sound, then pronunciation could be taught by such means; or if Bell's "Visible Speech" were universally employed in all schools and colleges as an available and additional aid to the teaching of languages, it would be easy to print directions which, carefully followed, would enable the student to pronounce French correctly; but facts are all the other way. Of the thousands of students who annually begin the study of a foreign language, a very large proportion pronounce their mother tongue in a most peculiar manner. The ear has to be trained, and the learner has to be rid of another idea commonly implanted in his brain, — that because a language is foreign it must be, necessarily, intricate

in its pronunciation. Practically, unless the vocal organs or the "ear" of an individual are defective, there should be no difficulty in any one pronouncing correctly any ordinary modern language, leaving out of the question that characteristic tone which we call the accent, and which betrays so quickly the mother-tongue of the speaker.

Pronunciation, therefore, must be taught at present orally, if it is to approximate to the correct sound; and it is well worth while spending some little time on this point, in order to encourage the learner to make use of sounds with which he is somewhat unfamiliar, and to break down that wide-spread objection to hearing one's self make mistakes. Still, for those who merely desire a reading knowledge, as well as for those who wish to speak the language, there is no necessity for dwelling at too great length at the outset upon the obtaining of a correct pronunciation; that is only a matter of time: it is little by little that the new sounds will be acquired and pronounced fluently. Much reading aloud is desirable, but still more desirable is a great deal of reading, of that reading which will furnish the student with a varied and useful vocabulary, and make him acquainted with turns of expression, with forms of phrase, with syntactical constructions, and idiomatic combinations. Reading not carried on in microscopic fashion by carefully turning up every word in the dictionary, but based upon the fact that there are many words identical, or nearly so, in form and meaning in both languages, thanks to that long intercourse between England and France which brought about, in the language of the former country, the use of many French words, or of words derived from the Latin through the French.

SIGHT-READING. — COMPOSITION.

Sight-reading, in short, is what must be aimed at quite early. Even if the instructor has to explain many a locution and many a word, he must first and foremost interest his students;

he must create in them a desire to know more; and for that purpose he must not keep them dwelling upon any one point so long that their attention lags through fatigue. There exist in French works enough of the character particularly suited to this plan of study, works which can be put into the hands of young people with the utmost safety, and which they will enjoy, because to the interest of the story itself is added the charm of that artistic style for which French writers are noted above all others, and which makes itself felt even by those who cannot fully appreciate the beauties of the work they are studying.

This is no mere hypothesis, no mere theory, but the result of experience. Students do begin the study of French without knowing a word of the language, without having the faintest notion of its genius or construction, who, in the brief space of four months, are able to translate at sight a piece of ordinary French; are able to follow intelligently the reading, by an instructor, of a French book which they have not previously opened; and who, before their first year of study has elapsed, can of themselves enjoy the perusal of many charming stories which, under the old plan of carefully digging out and polishing every word, with the assistance of that frequently misleading authority, the dictionary, would have remained closed to them for many years; would, indeed, have never been sought by them, because long before they could have acquired any facility in reading, they would have been disgusted and driven from the study by the numerous obstacles and difficulties that presented themselves. Let it be remembered, also, that with the acquisition of a vocabulary of French words, with the familiarity thus gained with French idioms and constructions, comes naturally the power of constructing in good French what one has to say. The translation of English into French, or French composition as it is usually called, should also be carried on on similar principles, though here, of course, the effort required will be a harder one, and

the progress cannot be expected to be quite as rapid; for there is great difficulty in persuading students to abandon the use of those forms to which they are wedded from childhood for those which are new to them, and the vigor and force of which they neither grasp nor appreciate readily. But after a time it will be found, if the system of carefully explaining on every occasion the essential differences between the two languages is followed, that it is possible to do in French composition what has been done already in French reading; namely, to take an English work and translate it at sight into good French. Such a result should be attained with college students of ordinary intelligence, willing to give up a sufficient amount of time to the preparation of their work, in the course of a couple of years. By this time their reading of French books should have made them familiar with a large number of the simpler works of good authors, and they should be prepared to enter upon the study of the literature as a literature with just as much interest as they would take in the literature of their own language; feeling themselves capable of understanding intelligently a lecture delivered in French, or of following readily the reading of a play, an oration, or a discourse, and of perceiving the beauties which the classic age of French literature, the philosophical period of the eighteenth century, and the splendid cycle of the nineteenth, present.

GROUNDWORK.

Qui trop embrasse, mal étreint. If a student is to learn French, let not the whole grammar, accidence, and syntax, all the idioms of the language, all the difficulties of pronunciation be poured into him at once. The fault of many grammars, methods, introductions, and teachers, is a desire to be erudite and to show how much the author or instructor knows. There are even some of the latter who would feel unhappy if they were inhibited from exhibiting their scholarship.

Enough is enough, and too much should never be expected

or asked of a pupil, young or old. If in the course of two years in a preparatory school, or of one year in college (students more mature and capable of being driven harder), a solid groundwork has been laid, success has been attained. The knowledge of broad outlines, the main points of the grammatical structure of the language, a moderate but well-acquired vocabulary, the power to understand easy spoken French, the ability to compose in simplest French, these are the points to be sought after, the ends to be attained. In succeeding years it is easy to build up on such a foundation; to add, progressively, needed details; to fill in the outline, and to make the pupil *know* French, that is, *use* it easily.

It is desirable to avoid excess of detail at first, and yet it is this excess of detail that is most noticeable in text-books. It is of very little practical importance to place before the beginner all the varieties of use of the preposition *de*, for instance; or all the exceptions to the general rule for the formation of the plural of substantives; or long lists of adjectives, the feminine of which is irregular; or, finally, pages of verbs, most of which he will not come across more than once or twice, if at all, during his first year or two of study. It simply bothers and torments a student to have a number of forms and rules set before him which he can neither understand, digest, nor remember. Elementary work should be elementary; free from all trace of erudition; free from all that is not absolutely necessary.

To illustrate: A beginner in French is in the same condition as a stranger dropped by train or steamer in one of our large cities. He starts out from his hotel for a walk, goes through a number of streets, notices only a few, a very few, of the principal buildings and monuments, and usually cannot quite tell how he got from one point to another. The second day he marks some points near his hotel, gets a better idea of the lay of the city; in the course of a week he knows the main thoroughfares, and probably does not board too often the

wrong street-car. But if he becomes a resident, it takes him still a good deal of time before he is quite familiar with the highways and byways of the place, before he learns the short cuts, and gets to know the best stores. He acquires his knowledge progressively, and would be very much amused were he furnished with a map and directory, and told to get up all the streets and most of the addresses before venturing out; or even were he told it was necessary for him to know the names of all the residents in the street he inhabits.

Few rules, therefore, should be given a learner at the outset. Text-books crammed full of information are favored by insufficiently prepared or indifferent and lazy teachers. They rely on the book; they cram the book down the pupil's throat; they close his mouth with it when he asks a question — the book is everything. Well, that is quite wrong! No book can teach like a living man or woman; no printed page can explain as pleasantly and interestingly as a well-posted, earnest teacher. The book is dead matter — the living being is preferable when living beings are to be instructed. The teacher himself must be the text-book; he, not the printed pages, must be the spring of knowledge for the students. Text-books are very useful, very necessary, but not indispensable for beginners. A good teacher with a small class could wholly dispense with a printed grammar or method, and give all the instruction, rules and exercises to boot, himself. A text-book is an aid, and a secondary one, and should, therefore, never usurp the first place.

Even with few rules, the simple, needed ones, much repetition must be resorted to. It cannot be helped; it is not exhilarating to the teacher, but it is indispensable for the pupil. And when the teacher feels the least inclination to impatience, because a rule, a remark already many times repeated, has been apparently forgotten, just let him remember, or, if he cannot remember, let him be absolutely sure that he, when learning, forgot just as readily the very same things, and

many more perhaps. Then quietly, pleasantly, gladly, give the needed information.

It takes no more time to repeat information than to get mad because it has been forgotten. And it is pleasanter all round.

Teachers — and men in general — are apt not to observe themselves closely enough, and, therefore, to ascribe stupidity, carelessness, laziness, to pupils when they themselves are really in fault. There are, of course, and always will be, stupid, careless, and lazy boys and girls, young men and maidens, men and women; but the proportion of these is by no means so large as some instructors would maintain. What is apparently stupidity in many a pupil, is, in reality, lack of clearness in the teaching. If difficulties are not clearly and intelligently explained, the student cannot master them, and the fault is not his at all. This is very much more frequently the case than many imagine. The writer has seen a great deal of teaching, not of French only, and has been amazed at the numerous imperfections of teachers visited upon the heads of pupils. Carelessness in pupils often arises from carelessness in the teacher; and laziness visible in a class may be traced not too seldom to the fountain-head.

A teacher of French must not spare himself. It is not easy for an American or an Englishman to learn a foreign language. All the help that can be given should be given. It is a mistake to suppose that by refusing the help asked for the student is compelled to do better work. He does not do better; he does worse. The sole purpose of a teacher's existence in that blessed state is to *help*. Assistance properly and promptly given, explanations cheerfully vouchsafed and gladly repeated over and over and over again, will bring on pupils much faster and much more surely than a policy of "find out for yourself — explained it before — so simple any fool would know it."

Again, in all elementary work, which involves a serious

amount of drudgery on the part of the pupil, — no matter how much aided by his instructor, — it is of prime importance to keep up the interest. A class must be always wide awake. If the teacher is sleepy, the pupils will snore; if he is bright and alive, the pupils will be the same. The teacher makes the class what it is. He has no one to blame but himself if it turns out poor with the average material furnished him. He must work, if the students are to work; and he must work harder than they, whether they know it or not. He must lead; always stimulate, encourage. And he must take great care to avoid monotony — it is fatal to success. No one exercise should last too long. Students will do a great deal of work if it is skilfully varied for them. They may not understand this; it is not necessary they should: but the teacher must understand and practise it.

The teacher may tire himself; if he is good he will: he must avoid tiring his pupils. He is not a preacher who has the right to be dull and wearisome; he is an instructor whose first business is to keep his pupils constantly awake, constantly interested, constantly learning and progressing.

Therefore he will vary the study; some grammar, not over much at a time; some written exercises, as a basis for future composition; some reading and translation; much speaking of French; plenty of explanations.

SIGHT-READING.

Sight-reading may be begun the first week.

Because sight-reading is not only very interesting to students, who derive from it a real sense of progress, but because there is a French element in English; and words alike or nearly alike in both languages are sufficiently numerous to make a short exercise in sight-reading possible and profitable. Needless to say that in the course of the first few lessons in sight-reading, frequent translation of words and phrases even will be required; but very soon the necessity for this will diminish.

and before many weeks are over the class will be able to follow the reading without much translation.

In sight-reading the object is at once to give a vocabulary to students, and to enable them to read French without necessarily translating it into English. They are to be told expressly that they are not expected to understand every word, but to grasp the sense of the passage being read. This is doing in French what nearly everybody does in English. Very few persons, probably, if the test were applied, could give the exact meaning of every English word they read; one need only glance at much of the writing published nowadays to be sure of that point, and also that writers themselves do not always understand the meaning of the words they use.

Sight-reading is a sure means of interesting students. Instead of wearying them by the dry and repellent old-time method of painfully digging out the meaning of each separate word in ten lines of Fénelon's "Télémaque" or Voltaire's "Charles XII.," it enables them to read, understand, and enjoy complete books. First year students in Harvard, for instance, read through Halévy's "L'Abbé Constantin," Erckmann-Châtrian's "Madame Thérèse," Labiche's "La Poudre aux Yeux" and "Le Voyage de M. Perrichon," George Sand's "La Mare au Diable," besides Mérimée's "L' Enlèvement de la Redoute," and extracts from Souvestre and other writers. In short, students being interested willingly do an amount of work which, under the old method, could never have been got out of them.

Translation goes hand in hand with sight-reading, but it must be translation, not transliteration. The plan of giving the exact dictionary meaning of each successive word is barbarous and productive of all manner of evil results. What a student must be taught to do is to avoid literal translation, and to give instead an equivalent in good English of the French original. A single example will suffice to illustrate the difference; and be it noted that the literal translation is

by no means exaggerated; it is just the kind of thing that teachers have heard over and over again: —

"Non, voyez-vous, Monsieur l'Abbé, vous avez tort de prendre les choses au tragique. . . . Tenez, regardez ma petite jument, comme elle trotte! comme elle lève les pattes! Vous ne la connaissiez pas. Savez-vous ce que je l'ai payée? Quatre cents francs. Je l'ai dénichée, il y a quinze jours, dans les brancards d'une charette de maraîcher. Une fois que c'est bien dans son train, ça vous fait quatre lieues à l'heure, et on en a plein les mains, tout le temps."

Here is the literal translation, such as the student is likely to give it with the help of the dictionary: —

"No, see you, Mr. Abbé, you are wrong to take things tragically. Hold, look at my little mare, how she trots! how she raises the paws, hoofs! You did not know it. Do you know that which I have paid? Four hundred francs! I found it out, there are fifteen days, in the shafts of a cart of a market-gardener. One time that it is well in its train it makes you four leagues to the hour, and one has the hands full of it, all the time."

Now, the student who is trained to sight-reading and to translate the *sense* of the passage and not the mere words, irrespective of their idiomatic meaning, will more nearly approximate this: —

"Now, look here, sir; you should not look at the dark side of things. . . . Why, look at that little mare of mine, how she steps out! Didn't know I had her, did you? Guess what I paid for her? Four hundred francs. Picked her up a fortnight ago from a market-gardener. Once she gets into her gait she does her twelve miles an hour, and it is all you can do to hold her too."

All allusions met with in the course of the reading should be explained, whether they refer to customs, manners, books, men, or history — and they should be explained slowly in French, repeating words or sentences if necessary; using simple language; speaking distinctly, and pitching the voice so that it will reach every part of the room. It may be advisable occasionally, but only occasionally, to briefly recapitulate in English what has been said in French; but this should

not often be done; much better stimulate the curiosity of the students. If they have not understood once, they will be anxious to understand the next time.

The test of sight-reading and good translation is not examination on a book already read in class, but on passages wholly new to the pupils. That test should be applied pretty frequently. It is a mistake to take it for granted that the students are progressing because they appear to work hard and the system employed by the instructor is good. The instructor must *know* that progress is being made; he must, therefore, use frequent tests to ascertain the exact standing of each pupil.

COMPOSITION.

The term "French composition" is often misunderstood in practice to mean transliteration from English into French. It is scarcely possible to commit a worse error, or one fraught with more disastrous consequences to students.

To turn a passage in English into French words is neither translation nor composition. It may approach the former; it is wide of the latter.

Composition means writing good French, and in the French way, with the French stamp.

This is not what is usually done. Instead, the dictionary is called upon, and about the first word found is accepted as sufficient and put down. The work thus done is invariably bad — no exception whatever obtains to this rule.

The first thing to be done when a passage in English is set for transposition into French, is to make sure that the pupils understand the meaning of the English. It is presumed the teacher does; it is certain that ninety-eight per cent of the pupils seldom or never take the trouble to assure themselves that they thoroughly grasp the sense of the passage.

This is the main obstacle to good work.

It must be impressed upon teachers and pupils alike that the

object to be attained is the reproduction, in another language, of the *sense* of the passage, of the ideas contained in it, as clearly, as plainly as possible.

That is the first and most important point.

The next, which is secondary, is to follow, as closely as the first point will permit, the form and style of the original.

Literal translation must be condemned. It is destructive of all truth and fidelity. It proceeds on the principle that the same words arranged in the same order give the same meaning in both languages. This is so utterly false that one cannot help wondering that any teacher should tolerate literal translation for a moment.

Generally speaking the use of elision is more frequent in English than in French. The tendency of the pupil is, naturally, to follow the English fashion. The teacher must not be surprised if it takes a long time to eradicate that habit — it has grown up with the student; it is part and parcel of his mode of thought.

French is richer in forms than English. That point has already been referred to with regard to the noun, article, and adjective. It is true, likewise, of the pronoun and the verb. Compare, for instance: —

Masc. sing. mine	le mien
Fem. " mine	la mienne
Masc. plur. ours	le nôtre, les nôtres
Fem. " ours	la nôtre, les nôtres

And in the verb: —

I had	j'avais
Thou hadst	tu avais
He had	il avait
We had	nous avions
You had	vous aviez
They had	ils avaient

The tendency of the pupil is to use one form only, or two or three at most, as in English. This also must be checked; and

while the training will begin during the year of elementary work, it will be found that it takes time to accustom the pupil to the difference between the two tongues.

The varied meanings of an English word are another source of trouble, complicated by unintelligent use of the dictionary. Here is one instance out of very many: "A stout German who leans on the railing," was actually translated: "*Un gros Allemand qui s'appuie sur la médisance.*"

The words *may* and *might* and *could* are constantly misapprehended and no distinction recognized in their use as independent or auxiliary verbs.

Idioms are troublesome, but mainly because teachers are apt to yield to the silly request to know "what it means *literally.*" An idiom never has any literal meaning, and the attempt to reproduce it literally is an exercise only fit for idiots. What possible good is done by translating literally — *Qu'est-ce que c'est que cela?* when *What is that?* is the real meaning of the longer phrase. Or, *Il se tordait les côtes de rire — He twisted his ribs with laughing,* which does not convey at all exactly the sense of the original, while, *He split his sides laughing,* does.

One can only give equivalents of idioms, and for this purpose, among others, it is requisite that the teacher should have a thorough knowledge of both tongues.

In composition, as in every other part of the work, explanation should be given freely and fully, all questions answered, all doubts cleared up. It is an applied, a practical way of teaching grammar, and can be made very useful if the teacher does not spare himself. Repetition will be needed, and a good deal of it; but it is fruitful in good results, and, besides, an instructor must never weary of restating a rule.

It is very important that the transcribed exercises should be read over by the instructor himself, even if he does not actually correct them, so that he may see exactly the nature and number of mistakes made. This will enable him to ex-

plain corrections in future lessons and to lay stress upon the particular points in which he finds the average of his pupils weak.

Particularly weak pupils should be taken in hand separately and shown exactly what their mistakes are, how to correct and, above all, how to avoid them. Many pupils fail from not knowing how to set about their work; they start wrong, and all the explanations given in class are Greek to them because they cannot see the object of them. A very little private work with such students is certain to bring them up to the level of their class and to transform them from apparently dull into intelligently receptive individuals.

It will generally be found that they do not understand the use of the dictionary; that they are not well grounded in the elements of grammar, or that, being fairly well grounded, they do not know how to apply what they have learned; and, finally, that they are totally ignorant of construction, a serious drawback in the study of a language in which clearness of expression is the prime requisite.

Few persons, among those whose mother-tongue is English, have any idea of how very loose and inaccurate is much of the so-called good English met with in books. The great freedom which the vigor and richness of the language allow of in its use, the frequency of ellipsis, the boldness of inversion, the large employment of figures and similes, are very apt to induce considerable carelessness in the expression of the meaning sought to be conveyed, resulting frequently in sheer obscurity. Now, this is utterly foreign to the spirit of the French language. A French writer knows and feels that he must be clear, and no piece of prose or verse which lacks this quality has any chance of being rated good.

Hence the instructor must take special pains to make certain that his students understand the meaning of the passage they are called upon to reproduce in French, and this is little attended to as a rule. There is apt to be a blind belief that

because an extract is taken from the works of a celebrated writer, the English is all right. It ought to be; it generally is, but not always; and even if it is, it by no means follows that the student understands it. Ignorance is very willing to let things go, and if a pupil does not care to take the trouble to grasp the sense of the extract, he simply makes a transliteration of it — a hideous abomination.

Here, by way of illustration, is an extract from "Pictures of Places," by Henry James, Jr. It reads very well at the first glance, but on examination, for the purpose of reproduction in French, the involved nature of some of the sentences and the very curious figures used become strikingly apparent: —

"The standpoint you are likely to choose first is that on the Canada Cliff, a little way above the suspension bridge. The great fall faces you, enshrined in its own surging incense. Already you see the world-famous green, baffling painters, baffling poets, shining on the lip of the precipice; the more so, of course, for the clouds of silver and snow into which it speedily resolves itself. The whole picture before you is admirably simple. The Horseshoe glares and boils and smokes from the centre to the right, drumming itself into powder and thunder; in the centre the dark pedestal of Goat Island divides the double flood; to the left booms in vaporous dimness the minor battery of the American Fall; while on a level with the eye, above the still crest of either cataract, appear the white faces of the hithermost rapids. The circle of weltering froth at the base of the Horseshoe, emerging from the dead-white vapors — absolutely white, as moonless midnight is absolutely black — which muffle impenetrably the crash of the river upon the lower bed, melts slowly into the darker shades of green."

Two very brief extracts from James Russell Lowell's "Essays" will make quite clear the necessity of understanding the author's meaning before attempting to reproduce it: —

"His 'French Revolution' is a series of lurid pictures, unmatched for vehement power, in which the figures of such sons of earth as Mirabeau and Danton loom gigantic and terrible, as in the glare of an eruption, their shadows swaying far and wide grotesquely awful. But all is painted by eruption-flashes in violent light and shade. There are no half-tints, no gradations, and one finds it impossible to account for the continuance

in power of less Titanic actors in the tragedy, like Robespierre, on any theory whether of human nature or of individual character supplied by Mr. Carlyle. Of his success, however, in accomplishing what he aimed at, which was to haunt the mind with memories of a horrible political nightmare, there can be no doubt."

Translate any part of this literally, and the result is incomprehensible nonsense. "Eruption-flashes," for instance.

Or this, which, at first sight, appears quite easy: —

Burke and Johnson were both of them sincere men, both of them men of character as well as of intellectual force; and I cite their opinions of Rousseau with the respect due to an honest conviction which has apparent grounds for its adoption, whether we agree with it or no.

Burke et Johnson étaient tous les deux hommes sincères, tous les deux hommes de caractère aussi bien que de force intellectuelle; et je cite leurs opinions de Rousseau avec le respect dû à une honnête conviction qui a des raisons apparentes pour son adoption, soit que nous nous accordions avec ou non —

which is very easy to do indeed, but is no more French than it is Chinese.

From the very outset pupils must be taught to use the simplest construction possible; to avoid lengthy sentences, abrupt inversions, obscure figures or similes. The art of composing in any language is not easily acquired, and to attempt to rival masters of language and style in the earlier stages of study is a piece of folly. These masters will furnish useful models, gradually improving the taste; but the main object of the teacher must be to enable his students to express themselves clearly and readily. For it must not be forgotten that translation of extracts is not the ultimate end to be attained. It is only a means to it, the end itself being the power, on the part of the student, to express himself at once in written French without first putting down his thoughts in English. Then, and then only, does he compose; but if he is constantly kept to English models, he will always want English to lean on — in other words, he will never *master* French.

Therefore students — and this applies to pupils in secondary

schools equally as much as to students in colleges — must be early set simple exercises in original composition. These may be a few lines only in length; consist of detached sentences even, but they must be written without the interposition of English. With the gradual progress made, the exercises increase in length and difficulty. The class hears read a short story, and writes a summary of it. Later still, a book having been finished, — say "La Mare au Diable" — the pupils are asked to write down either a scene from it, or a description of one of the characters, or a sketch of the plot. Again, after a vacation, they can be called upon for a short letter, telling how they spent their time. The results will often be crude, so crude, perhaps, as to discourage the teacher. He *must not be discouraged.* That anything has been produced is of itself a satisfactory result, and a guaranty that the students are capable, with careful instruction and inexhaustible patience, of doing better work.

By way of illustrating what is actually obtained from students, here are a couple of notes written, the one on December 20, the other on December 23, by two students who entered the elementary class in French at the beginning of October, neither of them having ever learned a word of the language at that time: —

I. "Avec cette même malle, je vous envoie cinq livres bleus des exercises français. Fidèlement, mon cœur est plus léger depuis ils sont partis. J'éspere que vous chercherez en vain des erreurs, mais j'ai pressentment de mal."

II. "J'ai reçu votre lettre ce matin, et je serai très heureux accepter votre invitation obligeante, sur le soir de Noël, le 25 Decembre, quoique je suis chagrin que mes amis Japons sont occupés ce soir là."

The first of these was written by an American, the second by a Japanese.

The more pains an instructor takes, the better the results will be; consequently, as pupils advance in composition work,

it is advisable to adopt something like the seminar plan. The asking of questions must be encouraged to the utmost, for even the cleverest and most experienced teacher can never remember *all* the difficulties.

When the work thus corrected *viva voce* in class has been transcribed, the instructor should, before proceeding to a new piece of work, re-read the correct form and again give explanations, if called upon — which he will be if the class is good. The *reason* of changes should always be explained; a pupil should know why a certain expression or term is right and another wrong.

In more advanced work where themes or summaries are written by the students, the corrections will be made out of class, as it would manifestly be impossible to correct each theme with the whole class and retain their attention; but arrangements should be made to meet a certain small, very small, number of the students separately at another hour, and there and then explain carefully the why and wherefore of each correction or substitution. Merely to correct in red ink is to assume a knowledge of grammar and style on the part of the student which he evidently does not possess, or he would not have needed corrections on his work.

Composition thus taught, in conjunction with much reading of French texts and with constant hearing of spoken French, will result in such marked progress that the student will gladly do any amount of work, do it well, and become really proficient in French.

MEMORIZING.

Memorizing passages of verse or prose is an exercise little relished, usually, by students, but it is a very useful one in three respects.

First, it increases the vocabulary of the pupil, and this is of great importance. All words are not retained, of course, but

those recurring frequently are well fixed in the memory, and it is these very words which are most needed by the learner.

Secondly, forms and locutions are acquired with comparative facility, and the more they are unlike those of the pupil's mother tongue, the more readily will they strike him and stimulate the desire to learn their exact force.

Thirdly, if the passages are recited aloud to an instructor, an excellent opportunity is afforded to correct and improve the pronunciation, always a difficult task, and one which must be constantly attended to.

The passages may usually be left to the choice of pupils themselves, controlled by the teacher's advice that such extracts should be preferred as are from good writers and usually referred to in books or conversation.

To make memorizing compulsory is probably unwise. Some people lack the peculiar power of memory which enables one to learn extracts by heart; it is wasting time and trouble to compel such individuals to memorize even a short fable of La Fontaine. They will stumble over the lines, mispronounce the words, lose the connection, make a mess of the sense, and irritate the instructor possibly, themselves certainly. In this, as in all other methods employed, due attention must be paid to the individual peculiarities of the pupil. Machine work, routine system, are quite inadmissible if success is to be obtained.

DICTATION.

This exercise is not open to the reservation made in the case of memorizing. It is good for all classes of pupils, and may profitably be employed even in the most advanced classes. Its primary use lies in accustoming beginners to recognize sounds and translate them into orthography. Beginners always mispronounce French when called upon to read aloud; they mispronounce it infinitely more when reading to themselves: what they go by is the *look* of the printed or written

word; what they recognize is the combination of characters, a familiar termination: they do not readily or correctly apprehend the words when spoken. Reading aloud by the instructor is an excellent means of helping pupils to connect the written or printed word with the sound of it when spoken; but it has one drawback in this respect: the student seeks to gather and follow the sense of the passage rather than to catch the sound of the words. Particularly is this the case when the class has the text to look at; then there is very little real work done in the way of connecting sound and print.

In dictation, on the other hand, the main object, at first, is to accustom the pupil to note carefully the sound of the spoken words and to write these sounds correctly. The sense of the passage is relatively unimportant in earlier exercises of this nature; it has to be taken into consideration, that goes without saying, but if it is not grasped no harm is done. All dictations in the early part of a course in French should be directed to one end, — recognizing printed or written words by the sounds. It is the training of the ear, not of the eye.

This training is a necessary adjunct to the teaching of pronunciation. The pupil cannot imitate what he does not hear; therefore he must be taught to hear, to distinguish one sound from the other, so that he may reproduce it correctly. A large amount of patience is needed here by both instructor and learner. The latter must apply himself attentively to catch the sounds actually emitted by the instructor, and he must beware of anticipating the sound; that is, taking it for granted that a particular combination of letters is pronounced in the way he has adopted for himself. As long as he does that he is sure to err; he will hear, not the pronunciation given by the instructor, but the pronunciation he has fixed upon in his own mind. It is like the jangling of bells — they ring whatever refrain happens to be trotting in one's head.

The instructor must be patient, particularly in repeating as frequently as necessary the words dictated, and in pronoun-

cing them distinctly. And here he must not forget that there are two ways of uttering words, and that he must use both if the pupil is to be properly helped along. There is the ordinary utterance, that used in conversation, in reading, where many syllables are slurred; and there is the syllabic, in which each member of the word is pronounced separately. *C'est un enfant extravagant* pronounced in both fashions will illustrate the point. Pronounced currently, the pupil will hear the phrase as in conversation; pronounced in syllables, he will have a better idea of the component members of each word, — *but* the instructor must always end by pronouncing the words conversationally, since that is the way in which they will usually be heard by the student.

Elementary dictations should bear upon those sounds which are *alike* in French and in English; there are, strictly speaking, no sounds exactly alike, but in practice many sufficiently resemble each other. Next, words in which similar or nearly similar combinations of letters occur in both languages should be practised on, *e. g.: nation*, nation; *historien*, historian; *canal*, canal; *science*, science; etc. Then sounds wholly French, comprising the whole range of nasals, the liquid *l*, the *y* in the middle of a word, and so on. After this, distinction between similar terminations in French, *bon*, *vont*, *aiment*, *souvent*.

With the progress of the pupil the dictations must assume a different character; rapidity of enunciation must be gradually introduced and the understanding of the sense of the passage insisted upon. Here, too, help must be given. When entering upon this part of the work the substance of the passage to be dictated may be explained briefly in English; the subject indicated at least. Then the whole passage should be read slowly and distinctly in French, to give the class an opportunity of understanding it, as far as possible; next the dictation proper, not many words at once; these repeated three or four times over, and the punctuation indicated, care having

been taken to inscribe on the blackboard the signs of punctuation, with their names in French. Finally, the passage should be re-read throughout. All this means trouble, but without trouble and painstaking no teacher can succeed. He needs to take both, and *intelligently*.

Correction of the dictation may be done in many ways. A very bad way, preferred by lazy instructors, is to have the work passed on to the next pupil, a general interchange thus taking place, and the pupils themselves being told to correct from the text if they have it. This plan invariably results in numerous mistakes being left uncorrected and in many miscorrections. The proper corrector is the instructor. He should make a point of looking at every separate exercise, so as to see for himself not merely the number, but, what is infinitely more important, the *nature* of the mistakes. It is an excellent lesson for him; a mode of obtaining very valuable information.

Once he has ascertained in this way what are the individual faults, which are the sounds most generally misapprehended, he can proceed to correct *in class*, using the blackboard largely to supplement his *viva voce* spelling. In thus correcting — it is understood that each pupil has had his exercise returned to him — the instructor must lay stress upon the more common mistakes he has noticed and illustrate by pronunciation and writing the difference between the right and the wrong way.

Dictations should never be very long; if they are they become tiresome to the pupil and do harm instead of good. Teachers who give long dictations do not correct them.

SPEAKING FRENCH.

There are many teachers, and very good ones among them too, who believe that in teaching a foreign language English should be used for all explanations.

The writer believes that on the very first day a beginner should hear the sound of the language he desires to learn, and that he should be taught in that language as far as possible.

Not that English need be proscribed; it cannot be in large classes if progress is to be made, but it should be entirely secondary; used as little as possible, and only when repeated attempts to make intelligible an explanation in French have failed.

Pupils will quickly pick up the ordinary phrases used in the work of the class-room; more difficult expressions, longer explanations, they will understand pretty readily if the blackboard is used as it should be, and especially if the teacher is patient and has sense enough to remember that Rome was not built in a day.

Reading at sight will greatly aid students in understanding spoken French, but the best means of making them do so is, after all, to speak it. If the teacher takes pains to speak slowly and distinctly at first, choosing easy words, using simple expressions and the simplest possible constructions, it is quite astonishing how rapidly a large class will learn to understand him.

Students should be encouraged to ask their questions in French; they will bungle very often, and some strange sounds will be heard, impossible, perhaps, to understand. In that case, let the teacher ask that the question be put in English, and then repeat it himself in French, drawing attention to the words used and to their pronunciation. The next time the student speaks, an improvement will be noticed.

If teachers only knew it — those who do not believe in speaking French — they could interest their class very greatly by talking about a point of grammar in French, or explaining an allusion, a word even. One of the pleasantest sights is to see some hundred and odd students listening "with all their ears" to a ten or twelve minutes' talk in French; students who, three or four months before, had never heard a word of the language.

But it may be objected that the understanding is only apparent, and that in reality the pupils thus addressed have not a ghost of an idea of what is being said. Very good; only when pupils do not understand, they do one of two things, sometimes both; they cease to listen, or they speak right out in meeting, and say they do not comprehend. The American student is not bashful, as a rule.

But foolish indeed is the teacher who neglects to *test* his pupils. The exercise of speaking to the class can be easily proved useful; in this way: talk for five, ten, fifteen minutes in French; then straightway make every pupil write down in English the substance of what has been said. This test has been applied over and over again with invariably good results, the percentage of failures being rarely more than two or three per cent. The summaries are of course collected at once.

A class so taught will prefer to be talked to in French, and every member of it feels that he has made distinct progress. He becomes more and more interested, and the teacher can be sure that all the work he wants done will be done.

Further, pupils thus prepared in their first year will be capable of acquiring a speaking knowledge of French much more quickly, and they will soon learn to follow and understand not only readings, but lectures in French. The language is then a living one to them. It *is* a language, a tool, a help in reality.

CONVERSATION.

A college student who learns Latin or Greek may be satisfied to read and write it with facility; but if he studies a modern language he ought also to be able to speak it. No training in modern languages is complete which does not include these three points, — facility in reading, writing, speaking.

Unfortunately, speaking cannot be taught in classes as

numerous as are those in most colleges, and especially in some of the larger institutions. Hence the failure of these institutions to turn out as many completely fitted men as they should.

The success of the language schools, so-called, arises from the classes being restricted in numbers. The idea is not original with them, but they have had the sense to apply it; and they deserve, consequently, all the patronage they get, even if they do not always succeed in carrying pupils very far.

When it comes to trying to teach more than a dozen persons at a time to speak in a foreign language, the task is so much beyond the powers of even very good instructors, that they tire themselves out without any corresponding good results.

Students can be taught to speak a foreign language, even if they have not the opportunity of going abroad; but it can only be done by capable instructors handling a restricted number of pupils, and meeting their class frequently during the week.

No class should exceed twelve in number: eight is quite enough; but a smart, competent teacher, with plenty of "snap," capable of making the lesson bright, lively, and interesting, can handle ten or twelve without too much over-expenditure of nervous force.

The first difficulty the teacher has to contend with in pupils is shyness. The sound of his own voice uttering foreign words is usually sufficient to "rattle" the most self-possessed student; and it is very difficult to make learners get over that feeling. It is worse in a large class; it amounts, in practice, to frequent stoppage of effort on the part of pupils. A small class is therefore likely to do better: for one reason, each member of it gets to know the teacher more quickly, therefore better, and is more apt to acquire courage to speak out.

The more tact a teacher has the better in this kind of

work. There must be no laughing *at* the student; on the contrary, a visible and real interest in his progress, and a constant readiness, nay, eagerness, to assist, aid, correct. There is scarcely anything more trying to a student than the attempt to express himself in a foreign language in the presence of others. Even if by a determined effort the feeling of shyness is overcome, there remains the difficulty of finding words to express the thought, of co-ordinating them, when found, in a properly constructed sentence, and of pronouncing the whole sentence in a way to make it partially intelligible. It is very important that the teacher should remember that these difficulties and obstacles present themselves each time that the student endeavors to speak; and he must from this fact learn to be very patient indeed and helpful to the utmost. It is well, also, to explain to the class that these difficulties exist, and must be met and overcome. When students see that their instructor knows thoroughly, and appreciates fully, the troubles they suffer from, they are at once encouraged. Encouragement, assistance, is what the teacher must give.

The instruction in conversation classes is best given in French exclusively. The object must be to counteract the tendency of the pupils to fall back upon English; a tendency so strong that no pains must be spared to check it. This is one of the reasons why conversation classes are so peculiarly exhausting: there is a strain put upon the instructor greater perhaps than in any other part of his work. Another reason is the necessity of bearing in mind the vocabulary already taught the students, so that a regular progression may be maintained and new words introduced just when needed. In this branch of the teaching of French, system is indispensable. It will not do to get up at haphazard conversations on all subjects under the sun. That plan answers very well with advanced classes, the members of which have acquired a sufficient vocabulary, fluency of speech, and, consequently, self-reliance. In the earlier stages of the work the ground must

be carefully prepared, and the pupil brought along from one point to another with the feeling that he is capable of advancing. This necessitates not only system and memory on the part of the teacher, but very frequent repetition at first, until the fundamental groups of words and sentences are thoroughly mastered. Tedious, this, if not varied, but it is for the teacher to be constantly bright, quick, alive; if *he* is, the class will be. If he be dull, the class will go to sleep.

Recourse should not be had to plays and novels. The temptation to the teacher to simply read the scenes or passages which he enjoys is very great, and the exercise is suddenly transformed from one in conversation to one in understanding reading. The better the teacher reads, the more he should avoid doing it. The pupils hear conversation read out; they are not themselves speaking.

Indeed, it cannot be too often impressed upon a teacher that his business in a conversation class, is not to talk himself, but to make the students talk. The former is easy, the latter is difficult; but it is the duty to be performed, and students should complain if the instructor indulges in monologues. It is not often that they will do it openly: they do it privately, among themselves, even when they have, for reasons of personal amusement or laziness, induced the monologue. Make the students talk — that is what the instructor of a conversation class must constantly repeat to himself.

CLASSIC WRITERS.

La Fontaine, Corneille, Molière, Racine, are read to a small extent in most elementary classes — meaning by elementary, first, second, and third year work in secondary schools, and first and second in colleges. It would be better for the pupils, and certainly for the authors, if neither fables nor plays were included in the curriculum of those years. Seventeenth century French comes under the denomination of modern French, of course, but only by contrast with Old French. A person

who can read nineteenth century French with ease will have little or no trouble in reading the classics of the golden age; but the case is different with those who are practically beginners. They cannot thoroughly appreciate the beauties of these writers because they are having a constant struggle with words whose meaning has changed, with forms and constructions which are obsolete. Their yet shaky knowledge of modern syntax is constantly being troubled by forms which they have been told they must not use, and which, nevertheless, are declared right when employed by masters of literature.

They are apt to be interested in Molière's comedies: "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" and "L'Avare" may always be depended upon to amuse a class, especially if read rapidly enough to enable the pupils to follow the fun: "Le Cid," in a minor degree, will captivate a portion at least; but Corneille's other masterpieces or Racine's superb works are dull and prosy to them. These splendid works of art should not be lowered to the base use of mere reading-exercises, but kept for that time in the study of the language when the pupils having acquired sufficient familiarity with it, no longer stumble along, but read with facility without the necessity for translation. *Then* the great writers may profitably be taken up and genuine enjoyment derived by students and teacher from intelligent study of comedy, tragedy, or fable.

Of the four, La Fontaine is least fitted for elementary work spite of the fact that in France it is a recognized child's book. Nothing can be more dreary for the pupils, more painful for the teacher, than the translating of even the first book of the Fables as usually done. It is a grievous, wicked sacrifice of exquisitely beautiful work, resulting in no good to anybody, and generally inspiring the pupil with as profound a detestation of La Fontaine as was formerly inspired for Fénelon by the misuse of his admirable prose poem. La Fontaine is essentially a writer for appreciative readers; besides which his

frequent use of archaisms and *patois* makes his fables particularly difficult of understanding to beginners.

If, however, La Fontaine, Corneille, Molière, and Racine are to be read, let them be read in such a way as will diminish as much as possible the objections raised above.

To begin with the fabulist. Instead of simply starting on reading and translating "La Cigale et la Fourmi," explaining painfully what *bise* means; that cicalas do not eat worms; that *oût* is spelt *août*, and so on, let the hint given by the poet himself be taken, and the collection of fables be presented to the pupil as *une ample comédie à cent actes divers.*

If the class is sufficiently advanced to understand spoken French, let the teacher, using that tongne, tell his pupils about the France of Louis the Fourteenth, its splendor and misery, its division into provinces almost as much separated the one from the other as if they were foreign countries, its magnificent court of Versailles, its nobility, its clergy, its *bourgeoisie* and its peasantry. Let him picture the times and the men; let him make La Fontaine, the *bonhomme*, live again before the class; show him wandering in woods, and by river and brook, or silent and observant in society, or bright and witty with the friends; and then, taking each fable, make plain each different act, show the alternate farce and drama, comedy and tragedy; the home scenes, the episodes of peasant life, the hits at king and courtier, the portraits of man, the mirror held up to nature. At once the class will brighten, and instead of voting La Fontaine a bore, follow with real interest and ever-renewed pleasure each successive scene. Let not the translation be a desperately dull transliteration, but a vivacious, racy, idiomatic reproduction of the original, retaining as much of the bloom, of the beauty, of the *esprit*, subtle and keen, as may suffer transposition into another tongue.

So with the dramatists. A vivid representation of the times, a clear exposition of the conditions under which they worked, a brief summary of the plot if desired, and a reading

of the text from which monotony is carefully excluded. One can do serious and thorough work without preternatural gravity and excessive boring of pupils. Lighten the tragedy as much as possible — there is not one piece which will not bear this treatment; bring out strongly the fine passages, the striking scenes; summarize the duller and less important; read *well* when reading to the class; possess your soul in patience when the class reads to you. As for the comedy, it will always take care of itself.

PRACTICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS OF MODERN LANGUAGE STUDY.

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THE student of educational affairs who has devoted any attention to the recent history of modern language study, must have been impressed with its progress and development during the last few decades in all civilized countries. The activity in this field has been such that it may well be compared with the revival of classical study in the sixteenth century; more than one striking parallel might be drawn between that period and the present, and, as is so frequently the case, our less biased view of past conditions might make it easier for us to see things of immediate concern in their true light.

The question what effect such an event is likely to have upon education in general, what relation it bears to the civilization of the age, is one in which all thoughtful people will easily be interested. In the minds of those who take an active part in educational affairs, this question naturally assumes a somewhat more definite and restricted form. We ask: *Why do we teach modern languages?* and it is this question I will endeavor to answer. It seems advisable, however, for the present purpose, to limit the term "modern languages" so as to exclude the vernacular; not, indeed, because the English does not deserve the first and most earnest consideration in any discussion of the subject of living languages, but because, for that very reason, and for others as well, it is more appropriately treated by itself. My remarks will also, for obvious reasons, have reference mainly to French and German only.

The first answer to our question may be given in the words of another :[18] *We teach modern languages, "essentially because they are so supremely useful."* Let no one, not even the votary of the sublimest idealism, for a moment be shocked by this confession! We say we teach modern languages because they are useful; who will advocate the teaching of useless things? We do not say, however, that we teach French and German because they can under all circumstances be put to immediate use in any special industry or trade; that is impossible, as will appear farther on.

What we do claim is, first, that the modern languages are extremely useful as *a means to literary culture and to a liberal education.* "We believe," Macaulay wrote in 1837, "that the books which have been written in the languages of Western Europe during the last two hundred and fifty years are of greater value than all the books which at the beginning of that period were extant in the world."[1] If this statement might possibly have seemed too strong at the time when made, it certainly cannot be considered so now, with the immense additional literature of the last half century thrown into one scale of the balance. The languages which furnish the key to a large portion of this treasure are indeed useful; and John Stuart Blackie, late professor of Greek in Edinburgh University, may well say that "the languages which claim most loudly the regard of an English-speaking gentleman of the present day, whether on the east or the west side of the Atlantic, are French and German." Next to the French and German he names the Latin, Greek, and Italian.[2]

The claims of modern literature, with reference to its æsthetic value and moral effect, and as a means of a more general diffusion of correct taste, have been discussed by able writers, who assign to it the first place in the intellectual culture of our time.[6] Lowell has pointed out how much the great English writers are indebted for their *style* to other

[1] Essay on Lord Bacon. [2] N.Y. *Independent*, Nov. 26, 1891.

moderns: "Did not Spenser . . . form himself on French models?" he asks. "Did not Chaucer and Gower, the shapers of our tongue, draw from the same sources? . . . Is not the verse of 'Paradise Lost' moulded on that of the 'Divina Comedia'? Did not Dryden's prose and Pope's verse profit by Parisian example? Nay, in our time is it not whispered that more than one of our masters of style in English, and they, too, among the chief apostles of classic culture, owe more of this mastery to Paris than to Athens and Rome?"[1] And as to ideas, the same great writer exclaims: "And shall we say that the literature of the last three centuries is incompetent to put a healthy strain upon the more strenuous faculties of the mind? That it does not appeal to or satisfy the mind's loftier desires? That Dante, Machiavelli, Montaigne, Bacon, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Pascal, Calderon, Lessing, and he of Weimar, in whom Carlyle and so many others have found their University, — that none of these set our thinking gear in motion to as good purpose as any ancient of them all? Is it less instructive to study the growth of modern ideas than of ancient?"[1] I will dismiss this point with the words of President Cox, of the University of Cincinnati, "I believe that whilst we could not afford to lose the old culture, we cannot afford to neglect the new." (25 iv., 3.)

It is further claimed that the modern languages are useful, nay, indispensable aids in the pursuit of other branches of knowledge. First of all, I mention the study of *English*. "Disguise it as we may," wrote Professor Hunt of Princeton, ten years ago, "it is not the most consoling reflection of the patriotic Englishman or American, that as yet the ablest researches into our vernacular are the product of Continental, if not of German, scholarship. . . . English grammar, most especially, has been studied in Germany from the scientific standpoint, with constant reference to primitive principles and forms."[1] Not quite ten years later another high author-

[1] *Princeton Review*, 1881, pp. 227, 231.

ity could make the statement that it was no longer necessary for the American student of English to go abroad to be taught the earlier forms of his mother tongue; that Anglo-Saxon and other Teutonic languages were taught in all the centres of learning in this country. And the number of institutions which have in recent years extended their courses in English is indeed very great. On the other hand, a large proportion of the leading works on the English language and literature are still written in foreign languages, and the same is true of articles in periodicals. A glance at recent numbers of *Englische Studien* and *Anglia* shows that all contributions to the latter, and sixteen out of seventeen to the former, are in German. Aside from this use of foreign languages in the pursuit of advanced scholarship in English, the study of foreign languages is itself one of the best means of learning one's own. "We have learned," says one of the greatest American scholars, "that the round-about course, through other tongues, to the comprehension and mastery of our own, is the shortest." [10]

The advanced student of the ancient classics, of philology, and of archæology, can no more pursue his study without French and German, than an ocean steamer can run from New York to San Francisco by the overland route.

In *Mathematics* we have it from good authority that ten valuable works in either French or German are published to one in English, so that it is impossible to make up a good mathematical library of English works alone.

Books in the *Physical* and *Natural Sciences* are perhaps translated more frequently than those in other departments, but here, too, much that is of the highest value to the specialist can be found only in some foreign language. There is a recent statement of Dr. S. Sheldon to the effect that Wiedermann's *Annalen der Physik*, and the *Jahresberichte* of the German Chemical Society, "contain more original matter each month than is published in America during a whole year." [1]

[1] Pedagogical Seminary, III., p. 488.

Until recently the *Science of Education* might almost have been considered a German science. Within the last twenty years, however, the contributions in English, French, and other languages to pedagogical literature have been numerous and important. Still, an examination of the monthly bulletins of publications in this field, or of educational bibliographies, shows a preponderance of German works; and the references in English treatises on the science of education are mostly to German authorities.

In an historical and critical work on *Aryan Philology*, published some twelve years ago by an Italian,[1] about four-fifths of the books cited are German.

In short, to use the words of President Eliot of Harvard, "the philologists, archæologists, metaphysicians, physicians, physicists, naturalists, chemists, economists, engineers, architects, artists, and musicians all agree that a knowledge of these languages is indispensable to the intelligent pursuit of any one of their respective subjects beyond its elements." [15] Or, to quote the president of another great university, "A liberal education absolutely requires that every English-speaking person should have a knowledge of French and German also; for it is from the French and Germans that in these days we receive the most important contributions to literary and physical science." [82]

I now pass to my second answer to the question "Why do we teach modern languages," which is, — *On account of their disciplinary value.* Here I must first of all guard against a misunderstanding. Mental discipline cannot be understood as something separate or separable from mental activity — every kind of mental activity, and hence the acquisition of any kind of useful knowledge, yields discipline. "The connection and interdependence of the two," says Professor W. D. Whitney, "are complete. No discipline without valuable knowledge;

[1] Pezzi: "Aryan Philology."

all valuable knowledge available for discipline; the discipline in proportion to the amount and value of the knowledge acquired: these are fundamental truths in the theory of education. . . . To ask what knowledge is disciplinary is the question of ignorance. The true question to ask is, What kind of discipline does any given knowledge afford, to what does it conduct?"[10] Discipline, as we shall see farther on, depends rather upon method than upon subject-matter; for even if we follow Professor Laurie and distinguish between *discipline* and *training*, and say that the mind is disciplined by fixing it on the formal or abstract, and trained by occupation with the real or concrete, it will be found that each branch of study has its formal and its real side, and it is a question of method which side is to be emphasized. Language, for example, may be taught "as a concrete subject; that is to say, with special reference to the substance of thought," in which case the pupil's mind is carried through processes of thinking, and is thereby *trained;* or it may be studied with reference to "the *relations* of the word-vestment," in which case the mind deals with the formal, the abstract, the grammatical, and thereby is *disciplined.* ([12] Lectures II. and IV.) It goes without saying that the true method has to provide for both.

I need not dwell upon the disciplinary value of language-study in general; it is self-evident, since language is the instrument which renders all mental power effective, "the medium by which our thinking processes are carried on." The subject of my discussion calls only for a brief presentation of the *relative* disciplinary value of *living foreign* languages.

Mental discipline, in any higher sense, implies continued effort and use of the judgment. Therefore, a special disciplinary power has been claimed for the ancient languages because they are so *difficult.* But this superior difficulty is by no means conceded by those who, having acquired a thorough and tolerably complete knowledge of both ancient and modern

languages, have investigated the question of their relative difficulty. The distinguished classical scholar Madwig has recently been quoted by a committee of the Norwegian Diet as an authority for the superior pedagogical value of Latin and Greek; and to what better authority could one appeal? Yet Madwig does not claim for these languages a greater intrinsic disciplinary value or logical structure, but he attributes their special educational value to the circumstance that they are more foreign to us and cannot be acquired from others by mere practice.[28] The same point had been made earlier by Beneke. In other words, the ancient languages, when studied thoroughly, yield better intellectual results than living languages taught superficially.

According to Beneke, a profound thinker and one of the ablest defenders of ancient classical studies, Greek and Latin are decidedly more difficult than French and English;[29] but it is only too evident that his conception of the *aims* and *methods* of the study of French, as compared with those of Latin and Greek, is very low. So much has been written on the comparative pedagogical value of the ancient and the modern languages, that a bibliography of the literature would fill a small volume. (See, e.g., [29] p. 375, and [30] p. 506.) But as far as my knowledge of the literature goes, it is only in recent times that men have renounced the unnecessary task of proving that little French, poorly taught, is not equal to much Latin, well taught. Beneke does not believe that the "outward elements" of Greek and Latin possess much or any educational power; yet it is these elements that are often so highly praised as means of mental gymnastics! As to ancient literature, it is, in his judgment, superior to modern in grand simplicity and beauty of form, but far inferior in richness and sublimity of thought. It is especially adapted to the young. "The educated *man*," he says, "will, as a rule, derive richer and more vigorous food from German and English authors; . . . but this richer and more vigorous food is not

yet suitable for the young." ([22] II., p. 122.) A similar thought has been expressed by an American scholar of our own day, who says, "The study of modern life and the language in which it is crystallized, is not milk for babes, but meat for strong men."

Professor Bernhard Schmitz, in his *Encyclopädie des philologischen Studiums der modernen Sprachen*, admits the greater difficulty of Latin and Greek grammar, but does not consider the study of grammar the principal difficulty in learning a language, but rather the wealth of the language itself, especially the phraseology; and with respect to this he claims all languages are equally difficult.[21] Others who have made comparisons in the same direction do not even concede greater grammatical difficulties to the ancient languages. And it would, indeed, be no easy matter to show why to comprehend the delicate shades in the use of tenses and moods in French "does not demand as severe and high an exercise of the discriminating faculty as to comprehend the same in Latin, or even in Greek;" [17] or why the correct use of the German prepositions does not call for as strict attention as that of the Latin and Greek prepositions; or why, in translating, "the powers of analysis and synthesis are not as much needed, and as much cultivated, by a thorough mastery of the German as of the Greek." [16] Does not a language like the French, which requires for an exhaustive, though brief treatment of the definite article twenty-six pages and forty-two different heads, and the conjugation of which contains forty-five more forms than the Latin, [27] offer sufficient opportunity for mental discipline? Dr. Wilhelm Schrader, Professor of Pedagogy in the University of Halle, justly ascribes eminent disciplinary value, both formal and real, to the study of French, if properly pursued. ([28] pp. 509–512.)

Professor Babbitt, of Columbia College, who has had experience in teaching ancient and modern languages, has examined in detail the advantages to be derived from the

pursuit of either, and comes to the conclusion that the discipline in both cases is equally valuable: he introduces, however, the question of *pace*, and believes that the opportunities for discipline lie at a more advanced stage in the modern languages than in the ancient; so that a modern language student, to gain the same amount of discipline, must go over more ground than the student of Latin and Greek; and for this the course of study and the method must provide.[9]

We find that in every case where the disciplinary value of modern language study is depreciated, the reason is to be found in an unfair comparison in which the *method* is lost sight of: "Just in proportion as methods have been bettered and the true spirit of linguistic training developed, the modern languages have risen higher in the scale of potent agencies for mind-culture." [11]

While feeling entirely free from any desire to detract from the merits of ancient language study as a means of higher education, we cannot but recognize the fact that our age is fast outgrowing the belief in any miraculous power of discipline peculiar to Latin and Greek. This change of opinion is going on in all civilized countries. [14]

Before leaving this question, it may be well to enter a general protest against the false assumption that the more difficult study always yields the greater mental discipline. If such were the case, other languages would be far ahead of any we have been considering; as, for example, the Nahuatl of old Mexico, the verb of which has eight hundred and sixty-five regularly derived forms, or the Otchipwé, in which every verb is capable of eight million variations.[14] And since the difficulty for the learner increases as the teacher deviates from the processes suggested by psychological laws, it would follow that, the poorer the teaching, the greater the discipline. But the truth is, there is scarcely anything hard for the average pupil, if the ideas are properly presented.[9]

The opinion may be held by some that, while the modern

languages are valuable for general mental discipline, they cannot furnish that special philological training resulting from the advanced study of Latin and Greek. But the least acquaintance with the history of the growth of such languages as the English, German, and French, and with the literature and methods of modern philology, must convince any one that such a view is untenable. "The wealth of material they [the modern languages] offer for philological training and historical investigation is becoming more appreciated every day." [11] "Had we nothing else with yet stronger recommendations to apply to," says Professor W. D. Whitney, "the German and French, especially the former, would answer to us all the essential disciplinary purposes of philological study; as, indeed, to many they are and must be made to answer those purposes. As the case stands, they are among the indispensable parts of a disciplinary education." [10]

If we apply to the study of living languages the test of systematic psychology, it appears that there is not a single mental activity which is not called into play and stimulated in the pursuit of this study, if properly taught, beginning at the foot of the scale, with sensation, up to the highest uses of the reasoning power and the judgment. But such inquiry into the influence of modern language study upon special mental activities involves necessarily the question of methods, upon which it depends. I will therefore pass to the second question: —

HOW SHOULD WE TEACH THE MODERN LANGUAGES?

The number of possible methods of teaching languages is infinite. The text-books may be counted by thousands: a bibliography, doubtless incomplete, of French grammars alone, published between the years 1500 and 1800, includes six hundred and fifty titles.[24] A large proportion of such works bears the sub-title "A New Method." And if we take into account the various uses made of the same text-book by

different teachers, the actual number of different methods of teaching, it would seem, must be legion. Many of the methods advocated or practised by eminent educators in the past have more than an historical interest to the teacher of to-day: the views of men like Erasmus, Melanchthon, Ratich, Comenius, Locke, the Jesuit teachers, of Jacotot, Hamilton, Marcel, Prendergast, Heness, Sauveur, and others, are suggestive and stimulating, and the history of their methods is instructive. But in all the literature of this class we do not find the true answer to our question "How should we teach the modern languages?" We must give it from our own standpoint, in the light of the knowledge and experience of the present age, being guided in the main by two considerations: *The method, that is, the "way," must lead to the end in view, and it must be in harmony with the laws of mind-growth.* The ultimate test of every method must be the psychological. Without it we are liable to commit the gravest errors and not be aware of them; mere practical results cannot be considered as decisive: the question how the results were obtained is of the utmost importance.

The task of learning a language consists in the acquisition of the *material* (vocabulary, phraseology, idioms) and the mastery of the *principles* or rules which govern the use of the material (inflections, syntax). If we attack the material first, i.e., the living language itself, we follow the *analytical* method; we begin, for instance, with a printed page or sentence, or a spoken sentence, and by analysis study the parts and their relations. If, on the other hand, we attack first the principles governing the use of the various parts of speech and their combinations, we proceed *synthetically*, constructing the language, i.e., the sentence, representing the unit of language, out of its elements, according to certain rules. The former method may also be called the practical, and the latter the theoretical, or grammar method. Then we may begin with either one of these two methods, and soon pass to the

other, and combine the two, so that we have, in addition, the *analytico-synthetic* and the *synthetico-analytic* methods. (It should be remarked that the terms analytic and synthetic may also be applied to the language-material, instead of to the process; in that case the meanings of the terms synthetic method and analytic method are reversed, the former denoting the method dealing with language in its synthetic form, the latter the method dealing with language in its analyzed, decomposed form. Thus Henry Sweet speaks of "the synthetic methods of the Middle Ages, by which sentences were grasped as wholes, not *analyzed* and *put together* like pieces of mosaic work.")[27]

I have set down as the principal aim in the teaching of modern languages, their *use* as a means of literary culture and of information in various departments of knowledge. Such use presupposes first of all the ability to *read* the languages.

Psychology teaches that the mind proceeds from a knowledge of "wholes" to that of their parts (analysis), and from the concrete to the abstract. We are, then, forcibly pointed to the *analytical* and *analytico-synthetic* methods; simple reading, not systematic grammar, forms the first step. An *elementary* grammar method, with plenty of illustrations in the foreign language, is not, however, to be condemned, since it lends itself to the analytical way of procedure. Though we care at the start more for the printed than for the spoken language, *pronunciation* is not to be neglected (as some methods demand), because the beginner will attach *some* sound-image (*Gehörsvorstellung*) to the printed word, whether we wish it or not; and the only safe way of preventing *false* sound-images from fixing themselves in his mind is to teach him the *correct* sounds. Thus, the knowledge of language begins, where all knowledge begins, with *sensation:* audible and visible signs, acquired through the senses of hearing and of sight, form the basis of clear *percepts*. It should be noted that, in the study of foreign languages, the foreign word, phrase, or sen-

tence, as the case may be, becomes the *object* of sense-perception; the contents of these, as well as their names in the mother tongue, are supposed to be known, at least approximately; the foreign sign, or form of expression, for a familiar idea becomes a *new object of perception.*

The student desirous of learning to read a foreign language for the sake of an accurate understanding of the subject-matter (and this is what our purpose necessarily implies), must translate into his own vernacular until he learns to understand the foreign without translation.

Psychology teaches that the mind advances to new knowledge on the basis of what it already knows.

Hence, the foreign language is to be studied by comparison with the mother tongue; *translation* into English, therefore, is to be begun at the very outset, not to be avoided, as some methods demand.

From *perception*, i.e., knowing what is present (to sight or hearing), the mind passes to *conception*, i.e., knowing what is not present to the senses: words and phrases must be in the pupil's *mind.* Hence, such parts of the lesson as the pupils are expected to retain in memory must be given by them for their English equivalents: *Translation into the foreign language* is necessary from the beginning; it will at first be confined to the rendering of phrases and sentences, but will have to be extended to the translation of entire paragraphs in advanced classes, in order to afford opportunity for the application of general principles.

Mental discipline — one of our aims in teaching living languages — is impossible without the exercise of the higher activities of the mind, of the reasoning power and of the judgment. Again, no accurate and reliable knowledge of a language, such as its use for the purposes of culture and information demands, can be gained without as tudy of the principles and laws governing its use. The study of *grammar*, therefore, is indispensable. We now proceed, in accordance

with the laws of mind-growth, from *simple concepts* to *general concepts*, to classes with certain general characteristics, from the concrete to the abstract. "We must base all generalization on the particular and concrete, which alone gives the general and abstract any meaning. Rules of syntax are generalizations, and they are to be constructed out of the initiatory reading-lesson by the pupil, with the help of the master."[12] Or, at least, all general rules are to be studied in close connection with concrete examples, and the reading-lesson should furnish these. This calls for *reasoning* and *judgment*.

The reasoning out the meaning of words from the context constitutes another valuable means of mental discipline. "This is not blind guessing; it is legitimate reasoning from the known to the unknown." ([25] vi., 60,61; v., 10,11.) Methods like Hamilton's and Jacotot's, founded upon the use of interlinear or lateral translations, are in general not to be recommended. The dictionary should be used, but not abused. *Sight-reading* in the class-room should receive due attention.

Translation requires the abstraction of the thought from the concrete form in which it is expressed, in order to vest it with a new form. *Discrimination*, both between different forms of *expression* and between various shades of meaning and *thought*, is constantly needed, and *no other method of studying the mother tongue is, in this respect, equal to this practice of translating from a foreign language.* But any method which discards the use of the mother tongue, as, for example, the so-called "Natural Method," is of inferior educational value.

Our aim in teaching modern languages implies a *ready use* of them; this means, the pupil must form the *habit of applying* his knowledge. The laws of habit (psycho-physiological) show that repeated action and essentially uniform method of action are necessary to form habitual action.[21] "Every acquisition in the shape of words or generalizations, accord-

ingly, must be turned to use, *from the beginning.*" The most important words, phrases, and rules must be used *frequently;* rare words and expressions will have to be passed over more rapidly. Every work read for the purpose of language-study ought to furnish a number (say from fifty to a hundred) of useful phrases and idioms to be firmly fixed in the mind. This should largely be done by oral exercises. *Oral exercises* provide the best means of acquiring *promptness* in the use of the linguistic material and in the application of rules. This practice is also due those members of a class who wish to *converse* in the foreign language; and experience teaches that a considerable degree of fluency in speaking may be attained by this method, if teacher and pupil follow it conscientiously through the course. The general method precludes, however, the teaching of conversation for special business purposes, or for foreign travel, which would involve the learning of special vocabularies and technical phraseologies.

Copious reading is another means of rendering the pupil, through *practice,* familiar with the common material of the language, and with the laws governing its use. It is equivalent to a constant review of what is of most frequent occurrence in the language. Besides, it has been well said, in the study of *modern* languages the student should use the *Will* "in keeping up the pace, rather than struggling with difficulties that are beyond his powers." (p. 54.)

Correct use of the language is always to be insisted upon. This, especially in the oral exercises, makes *concentration* imperative and serves in an eminent degree as a discipline of the *Will.* At the same time, the *Will* is stimulated by the attractiveness of the exercise. A superficial conversation-method which relies upon imitation alone, and neglects the application of general laws to special cases, does not strengthen the will-power.

Practice in the use of the foreign language cultivates the *Imagination.* The imagination is active in reproducing what

has been acquired; it "selects, modifies, arranges, combines." A pure *reading*-method, like Marcel's, is less effective in this respect. The reading and translating of foreign authors is of the highest value to the development of the imaginative faculty, and conversation helps to lend vividness to the pictures in the mind.

I have not mentioned the cultivation of the *Memory*. It is evident from the foregoing considerations that the study of modern languages offers wide opportunity, not only for the exercise of verbal memory, but especially for the rational use of this important power, by means of association, comparison, discrimination. Even in the acquisition of the vocabulary of the foreign language, all these aids may be made use of by observing the formation and derivation of words from common roots, etc.; and there is a still wider use for them in the study of idioms and phrases, where the reasoning power should always be appealed to.

Further, in the study of authors, the imagination may be made a powerful aid to memory; as, for example, when, with the situation and the characters, their expressions and conversations are recalled. And while the introduction of philological matter in elementary classes is, on the whole, to be avoided, it affords not unfrequently a valuable help to memory. In like manner, the principles of the historical development of language may be legitimately used to assist the memory and the understanding. Thus, Paul's "Principles of the History of Language," is full of suggestions to the teacher.

Methods which, like Prendergast's, or its more modern representative, the *Meisterschaft System*, reduce the study of a language for many weeks and months to the memorizing of one hundred words, and to ringing the changes on sentences formed with this limited vocabulary, leave little room for a rational cultivation of memory. There need be very little mechanical memorizing when the method I have outlined is followed.

Since literary culture is one of the ends we have in view, the method of teaching must make ample provision for the cultivation of literary taste. The literature read must not merely be treated as a means of learning the language, but it must also be studied from the *æsthetic* standpoint, and open to the student occasional glimpses into the field of comparative literature.

The study of the best literary productions in a foreign language ought also to lead to certain *ethical* results. "The literature of a people reflects its character, its manners and morals, its history; to study the same means, in a certain sense, to share in the intellectual, moral, and political life of the nation, which we esteem the more, the better we know it." [22] The study of modern languages ought, therefore, to have an "eminently conciliatory" influence. No student of the literature and life of various nations can fail to see how generally these misunderstand and misjudge each other, and how true is the judgment of an eminent writer with which I will close: "The relation of the various peoples of the earth to the supreme interests of life, to God, virtue, and immortality, may be investigated up to a certain point, but they can never be compared to one another with absolute strictness and certainty. The more plainly in these matters our evidence seems to speak, the more carefully must we refrain from unqualified assumptions and rash generalizations. This remark is especially true with regard to our judgment on questions of morality. It may be possible to indicate many contrasts and shades of difference among different nations, but to strike the balance of the whole is not given to human insight. The ultimate truth with respect to character, the conscience, and the guilt of a people, remains forever a secret; if only for the reason that its defects have another side, where they reappear as peculiarities or even as virtues." [1]

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34. C. H. GRANDGENT, The Teaching of French and German in our Public High Schools. (School and College, March, 1892.)

35. O. B. SUPER, The Aim and Scope of the Study of Modern Languages and Methods of Teaching them. (University Magazine, April, 1892.)

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MODERN LANGUAGE STUDY IN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. WHAT NEXT?[1]

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THE Reform Movement in modern language teaching, which may be regarded as first acquiring prominence in 1882 with Vietor's famous pamphlet, *Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren*, had made such progress in Germany during the following decade that in 1892, at the Neuphilologen-Sammlung in Berlin, Professor Wätzoldt exclaimed, "Die Hauptsache von dem, was wir lange gehofft haben, ist jetzt erreicht! im Unterrichte ein Ausgehen vom Laut, eine Sicherung der Aussprache zunächst als erstes Ziel, die Lektüre überall im Mittelpunkt als das Fruchtbare, die Grammatik die Dienerin der Lektüre, ein Zurücktreten der schriftlichen Übungen, die Forderung dass keine Stunde ohne Sprechübung sich vollziehe, eine vielseitige Bewegung des Lektüre-Stoffs durch den Lehrer, und zwar in französischer bezw. englischer Sprache."

During that decade not a word seems to have been published on this side of the Atlantic concerning the new movement, and Sweet and Widgery are the only English authors whose names appear in Breymann's *Neusprachliche Reform-Literatur von 1876–1893*. In November, 1893, two articles appeared, one by Vietor, in the *Educational Review*, entitled "A New Method of Modern Language Teaching," and the other by Rambeau, in *Modern Language Notes*, on "Phonetics and the Reform Method." In 1898 Mary Brebner's "The Method of

[1] Paper read at the meeting of the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, at Philadelphia, Pa., Nov. 30, 1912, and reprinted from the *Educational Review*.

Teaching Modern Languages in Germany" was brought out by The Macmillan Company, in London and New York. Still, it is probable that, previous to the Report of the Committee of Twelve of the Modern Language Association of America, not one per cent of the teachers of French and German in American public schools had ever heard of the movement. This report was published by the National Education Association in 1899, was printed by the United States Commissioner of Education as a chapter of his annual report, and was published in convenient form and at a nominal price by D. C. Heath and Company. The sections on methods were drafted by Professor Charles H. Grandgent, and doubtless no better critical review of language methods has ever been printed in an equal number of pages. Modern language teachers, and superintendents with a yearning to improve the teaching of French and German, should read these sections often and attentively before undertaking radical reforms.

Since 1900 the terms "reform," "phonetic," "direct," "natural," "Heness-Sauveur," "Berlitz," "Gouin," "psychological," etc., have hovered over every modern language conference, sometimes with a context that has led us to suspect glibness and superficiality rather than scholarship and accuracy in those using them. Associations like your own, and the New England Modern Language Association, with its annual meeting and the frequent reunions of its local groups, have done faithful and fruitful work.

What has been the result of these activities? What real progress has been made? To what should our immediate efforts be directed? As the head of the French department in a large school, from a wide and intimate acquaintance with teachers, and most of all from the saddening knowledge of how unsatisfactory are the achievements of pupils in my own classes, I am sometimes ready to cry out, "Could anything be worse! Was the teaching of modern languages ever less effective!" And when these melancholy impressions are con-

trasted with the roseate descriptions of what some one is doing elsewhere with a new and wonderful method that we are all urged to study and imitate, the burden seems almost intolerable. One thing has kept me from being utterly crushed and discouraged; it is the occasional opportunity of testing the products of some much vaunted "system," and finding out how inferior they commonly are to what we ourselves have thought so bad. I see the illegible, misspelled theme of some son of French parents, whose ability to speak and understand has led me to put him into a third-year class; or my ears are afflicted by the voluble utterance of an ill-trained youth whose freedom from grammatical and phonetic prejudices wins the admiration of those who do not know the proper way to express what he is trying to say; or I learn how densely ignorant of first principles are some who surprise me by the number of pages of difficult French they assert they have read in a course of one or two years. So, after nearly thirty years of alternating depression and relief, I have come to believe with Horace, "Nil admirari prope res sola est"; to be unperturbed by what Professor Grandgent has called "the pedagogic Grape-Nuts and Sunny Jims"; to realize that prodigies will bob up under any system, and can generally attend to their own development, while for the rank and file of our pupils so little can really be well done, in the time at our disposal, that the greatest wisdom appears in resolutely refusing to chase after the unattainable, and in limiting our aims to what is possible and most essential. I should define these aims somewhat as follows:

1. The habit of careful, accurate observation and definite, connected thinking.
2. Ability to pronounce correctly a French word or expression.
3. Ability to get the exact thought of a French writer.
4. Ability to understand simple French distinctly spoken.
5. Improvement in English.

6. A knowledge of French sounds and how to make them, a vocabulary of common French expressions closely associated with the corresponding thought, and a feeling for French word-order, all of which together constitute the necessary and sufficient foundation for speaking and writing French when the occasion arises.

Have our high school teachers generally reached similar conclusions? It is hard to make any very positive statements from the data at our disposal, but I think that all over the country the discussions of the last ten or twelve years have aroused our teachers to a new understanding of what learning a modern language ought to mean, have wonderfully extended and strengthened the demand for attention to the oral side of the instruction, and have inspired a fervent desire to use the right method, although the definitions of the right method present an almost infinite variety. The publishers have done a mighty work in supplying texts to fit all these definitions, and their agents have preached pedagogic gospel even more widely than the teachers' associations. In a general way I should estimate that a third of our schools are still teaching French or German as those subjects were usually taught thirty years ago: a dose of grammar administered for a period of from six months to a year without other distraction than the Ollendorfian sentences of themes and exercises, pronunciation to suit individual preferences; next, a combination of grammar continued and French text unread or badly read, but done into translation-English, the text showing a rapid transition from classic anecdote through moral tale or fairy story to literary masterpiece; lastly an oversetting of Corneille, Racine, or Molière.

Another third, perhaps, are varying this by giving the text more prominence, making a better choice of text and grammar than would have been possible thirty years ago, doing better work than formerly in pronunciation, and making enthusiastic but ineffectual efforts at conversation. The remaining third

are doing vigorous work with many varieties of "reading," "reform," "natural," or "psychologic" methods.

Taken "by and large," considering time allowed, the training and interests of our pupils, and the language attainments most needed by our graduates, I am inclined to believe that this third are getting as good results as can be shown anywhere by as large a number of teachers teaching any subject by any method. The results attained by a Walter, a Sauveur, or a Bétis, under favorable conditions, are quite different from the results to be expected from an average American teacher working by the same method with an ordinary high school class. Much as is said about method, I hold that of the three elements: pupil, teacher, method, the last is the least important, and that a scholarly, vigorous teacher, with a bright pupil, will do more by any method he is likely to follow, than can be attained by an indifferent teacher with a dull pupil and the best of methods. If achievement in modern languages suffers more reproach and ridicule than achievement in other subjects, it is because no other subject of the curriculum faces such exacting demands. The attainment of our boys is compared directly with the power of a man who for a lifetime has been depending on French or German to express his thought and answer every query. Imagine our Latinist suddenly confronted by Cæsar or Virgil with a request to be directed to the railway station, or suppose Xenophon should demand of our prize Greek scholar information concerning American *Realien!* Are the critics of high school English — learned by many years of both direct method and objective study — much less severe than the critics of high school French? And what does the business man say of our young people's arithmetic? The fact is that every mature specialist demands more of a boy than the ordinary boy ever has possessed or ever will until he has himself become a specialist. And the public school ought not to be a professional school or a trade school. The wise father does not wish his son to specialize before the age of eighteen.

This does not mean that we are satisfied with present conditions; it does mean that much of the abuse heaped upon modern language instruction is unintelligent and undeserved; that very many of our modern language teachers to-day are the peers of the best of their colleagues and are doing effective, intelligent work, although their methods vary widely. A clear understanding of this fact is the first essential of any real progress. Improvement can never come by radical action on the part of men who know as little about modern languages and how they should be taught as the majority of our critics, our school boards, and our superintendents. It must and can come only through careful analysis of the situation, an analysis made by experts with an intimate knowledge of conditions, and a wide, accurate knowledge of what has been done — as distinguished from what has been claimed — elsewhere. Change must be evolutionary and not revolutionary; it must conserve much that is good in our present work; it must let most of the teachers we now have continue to work in the way and with the tools that for them are most effective. Goliath would never have been slain, had Saul compelled David at once to take the king's sword and leave his own sling and stone in the camp; although in later years, with further development, David himself, no doubt, came to prefer the sword and to wield it effectively. No method that has grown up and succeeded in other lands, under totally different conditions, is likely to be as good here, if suddenly imposed upon us, as the practice that the best of our own teachers have developed under local conditions. Those conditions must change before any great changes in method can fairly expect to succeed. No intelligent discussion of method can fail to consider our possibilities and our greatest needs, and more important than any general discussion of method, is the concrete question how to extend our possibilities and then more effectively meet our own chief needs.

Compared with conditions in Germany, we are tremendously

handicapped by time limitations. Even disregarding the one-year course, that is generally condemned as an abomination, and the two-year courses that are chiefly confined to the minor language in fitting schools, the time at our disposal does not exceed five hours a week for four years, and must usually be restricted to four or five hours a week for three years. With these limits, few of our best teachers think it wise to try to accomplish more than has been already specified, and but few undertake to do anything worthy of the name of conversation, free composition, or literary criticism.

Sweet points out the great difference between power of recognition and power of reproduction, and the relatively long time required to develop the latter. Whether it is wise to give a large share of our time thereto, must depend on the relative value of the acquisition. In an excellent article in the October number of the *Educational Review*, William Raleigh Price gives relative values assigned by the New York State Examination Board as: —

Ability to read and understand the language in print .	47 per cent
Ability to use the language in writing	36 per cent
Ability to understand the spoken language	9 per cent
Ability to speak	8 per cent

For examination purposes, 36 per cent may not be too much to allow for ability to write, but in estimating the usefulness of language power to American high school graduates, I should deduct more than one-half of this and add it to the ability to read, making the percentages about 70, 13, 9, and 8. Plainly, an ideal American method must not waste, in a vain attempt to secure the 30 per cent utilities, time which is necessary and in large measure sufficient to attain the 70 per cent desideratum. Such a method must also consider the pupil's general training, and do something for his education in such correlated subjects as English, history, geography, economics, art, science, and ethics. Oral demands must always be emphasized, and as yet

they have been rather too modest than too obtrusive, but they must not be regarded as synonymous with feeble attempts at inane conversation, and they must not be allowed to overshadow more important objects.

Varying types of schools will require varying emphasis on different phases of the work. In a Latin school, a pupil may get excellent instruction, highly effective, because in harmony with other training, from a class conducted in large measure by a grammatical method; in a high school of commerce, or a mechanic arts high school, a very different method would probably be preferable. A direct method, teaching largely from objects and pictures, would be effective with beginners in the sixth grade; a similar method would be wasteful and tedious with older pupils. The teacher's ability to do certain things well, and his inability to do others successfully, must likewise receive careful attention in deciding what method he shall use. It therefore seems unwise to prescribe one course which all shall follow. Progress will lie less in insisting on any particular method than in making teachers familiar with the advantages claimed for various methods, in having them know as well as possible the language they teach, in determining just what it is possible to do well in a given time with a particular class. Having made this decision, let each teacher strive to attain the desired results by whatever method or combination of methods appears most likely to secure the ends in view. In all cases, however, the plan should be such that nothing learned, no habit formed, should stand in the way of future progress. If pronunciation is attempted, only a good pronunciation should be tolerated; if conversation is tried, it should be based on models that will keep the pupil from inventing and remembering incorrect expressions and constructions; if translation into English is allowed, the English should be acceptable to the English department.

Avoiding in this way the Scylla of despotic interference with the individuality of class and teacher, we may shun the

Charybdis of too lax requirements by insisting that certain things should be done in every course fit to be offered at all in a high school; and a considerable majority of our best teachers are probably seeking to accomplish them about as Wätzoldt puts it in the sentence already quoted. Their method may be outlined somewhat as follows: —

Start with the sound; an accurate pronunciation must be the first aim, for the pupil cannot avoid associating some sound with the printed forms, and if these associations are wrong at first, it is almost impossible to correct them later. This accuracy may be obtained with or without the help of a phonetic text; it may begin with letters in a triangle, with syllables on a blackboard or chart, with short words introduced by objects or by a simple text. Most teachers are agreed that it is wise to let the pupil hear the sound a considerable number of times before he tries to make it himself; that his careful attention should be directed to the position of the speech organs and the physiological relations of different sounds; that he should hear and speak the sound repeatedly before he sees a normal spelling, which, for a long time, will have a tendency to mislead him because of English sounds associated with the letter; that the pupil will make a sound more confidently and certainly if he tries it first in unison with other pupils; that complete word groups should be given very early; and that, from the time words are introduced, sound and thought should be closely associated. For many months, no text should be assigned for home study until it has been at least read aloud by the teacher and repeated by the class, with continual drill upon the more troublesome sounds and word groups.

Everywhere the reading should be made the centre of the instruction. This is the fruitful source of every kind of profitable exercise; pronunciation, memorizing, dictation, copying, paraphrasing, reproduction, conversation, language exercises of every kind radiate from it; to it we may look for

whatever knowledge and culture language study can give us. How far the many-sided treatment of the material is to go, how much of the hour can be given to oral exercises based on the text, whether this shall be translated or read aloud and discussed in the foreign language by class and teacher, what text should be read and what phase of it emphasized, are questions to be answered by each teacher in the light of his own judgment and his knowledge of particular conditions; but the text should never be left until its thought is clear, and this thought should be associated directly and as permanently as possible with the expressions of the text.

The grammar should be the handmaid of the reading. Grammar must be a means and not an end; it must be subordinate and not dominant; it should be brought forward only as its need is felt; its function is to explain the phenomena of the text and to give our own expressions a form that shall make them clear and pleasing to others.

Whether among us the written exercises of which the German reformers complained are excessive is doubtful. It does not seem to me that, in most of the schools I know, they are too frequent, too long, or too difficult. It is true that several sentences can be spoken in the time required for writing one; and I am of the opinion that the material of the written exercise should be thoroughly worked over orally before the pupil tries to write it, so that written errors should be reduced to a minimum. When this is done, writing is a most valuable exercise, as nothing else so effectively fixes expressions exactly and permanently in the mind.

To this outline of method, I would add a word on the subject of promptness and speed in the conduct of the class. Probably this would never occur to a German, who expects his pupil to go to the board on a dog-trot, and could not conceive the dawdling waste of time permitted in many American class-rooms. Questions should be fair, clear, and definite; the pupil who cannot answer such a question promptly and well should quickly

make way for one who can, and not be allowed to kill the recitation and rob his fellows of valuable opportunity.

Assuming some such agreement on what it is wise to attempt under present conditions, we come to the practical question of how to extend the possibilities open to us and how to secure a more complete training for students of French and German. The "next things" for the immediate future comprise the following suggestions: —

By eliminating futile attempts to do the impossible, we can concentrate effort on essentials and better employ the time we now have.

By continued activity on the part of teachers' associations, we can endeavor to bring all schools up to the standard already attained by the best.

We can insist that the colleges do more toward giving us competent teachers. They can do more than they are doing, both in intensive teaching of what a modern language man ought to know of his subject, and in providing courses in the methods of teaching foreign languages. It is true that they cannot compel students to take these courses after they have offered them, but as the demand for better teachers makes itself felt, more students will feel that such courses are worth taking. And I am going to suggest one thing more that ought to be feasible and of great value. Very many of our young men and women who take up teaching cannot afford a professional course in addition to the regular college course, and in the four years after leaving the high school they must get whatever training they can hope to secure before beginning to teach. Whenever, in the interest of such students, we ask for more attention to the oral side of language work in colleges, we are told that the only place to get a really effective possession of a foreign language is among the people who speak it; that in this respect the best possible college courses cannot take the place of residence abroad. And this is true. Why not, then, let a student who plans to teach French or German offer,

instead of four years in residence, three years in residence and a year spent in France or Germany following courses approved by the college? American colleges will generally allow credit for work done in another American institution of good standing, and in Germany very many students spend one or more semesters in universities other than that from which they take their degree.

To this proposition it will be objected that American college boys are at an age when they need the oversight and counsel of competent college authorities, and that it would be inadvisable to turn them loose to work out their own salvation in Paris or Berlin. This is also true, but why should not some of our colleges combine to establish in each of these cities a professorship, the incumbent of which should be a man familiar with the city and its educational opportunities, wise in dealing with young men, competent to act as their adviser and guardian, vested with the authority of the college over students who are sent to him? Five hundred dollars a year from each of ten American colleges would maintain such a professorship, and the work which a foundation of this kind could accomplish in ten years for the training of teachers of French and German would be inestimable. In addition to his supervising and advisory functions, such a man might give a course on methods of teaching foreign languages, and could probably get permission for his students to see something of the teaching of foreign languages in French and German class-rooms. It might even be possible for them to do some of the work now open to lectors and exchange teachers, thus getting into close touch with schools abroad.

Our large cities, especially those with wide commercial relations, ought to do more than they have yet done to secure the best teaching of languages, and to give opportunities for some pupils to begin serious study of a foreign language in the grades, under competent instruction. From time to time this has been tried, and it has failed. The reasons for the

failure are not far to seek. They are to be found in administrative incompetence and timidity. Some twenty years ago, Professor Grandgent, then Director of Modern Languages in Boston, undertook such an experiment, and if he had been retained and given a free hand, he would undoubtedly have made a success of this as of all his other undertakings. But when Harvard College won him away from Boston, the position of Director of Modern Languages was abolished, the work begun lapsed, and no foreign language study in the grades has since been tried there. Many similar undertakings have had a similar end; and the reform, which every modern expert regards as most important and certain to come in time, will never succeed until some school board has the courage and intelligence to see that such an undertaking demands a supervising expert who knows what to try and how to try it, what to avoid as well as what to attempt. Such a man must be elected for a term of years long enough to enable him to carry through deliberately and carefully a course of instruction, the full results of which cannot appear for some seven years. He must have sufficient money at his disposal to secure capable teachers, and power enough to put them where he wants them and keep them there.

Once let a city do this for ten or twelve years, and it will find in the young people it has trained an unfailing supply of the sort of teachers whom it is now almost impossible to find, and the lack of whom is the chief factor in making the first steps in this direction so slow, difficult, and costly.

Our cities must realize, too, the unusual preparation of a well-equipped teacher of modern languages, and how rare these teachers are, even in our high schools. When they get such a teacher, they must recognize her value, must appreciate the expense, as well as the importance, of study abroad, must consider the nervous and vocal strain inseparable from successful teaching by a direct method, and cheerfully grant sabbatical years, on half-pay, for periodic rest and study. Nor

must they require a greater number of teaching periods per week than it is possible to give without exhausting demands upon voice and energy.

One of the most hopeful signs of the times is a perception that one language thoroughly studied is worth more, from both an educational and a business standpoint, than two languages smattered. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology now follows this principle in the courses arranged for its undergraduates; and Harvard College, in its new plan of admission, makes it possible for a man who has done intensive work in one or two languages to enter college as easily as the man who has divided the same time among three or four.

My conclusions are that the case of modern languages is not as bad as some would have us think; that no subject in the curriculum has of late been getting more earnest consideration from its teachers; that our best teachers are now using intelligent methods and getting results commensurate with the time employed and the success of other subjects in the same schools. On the other hand, in comparison with what is done elsewhere and ought to be done here, the achievement is insignificant. We must increase our efforts to get good teaching in all, instead of in a few schools; we must have the active help of the colleges in getting teachers properly prepared; we must try to get language study begun aright in the grades by a portion of the pupils there; we must convince school authorities that it is absolutely necessary for teachers of a modern language to be well prepared, well paid, and not overworked.

The method of our best teachers is comparable with that suggested twenty years ago for the German schools and now pretty generally adopted in Europe; but lack of time, and the little actual demand here for power to write, to speak, and to understand the spoken language, has rightly caused reading power to be emphasized, but wrongly led to undue neglect of the oral side of the instruction. Of late there has been a

vigorous effort to correct this; and as courses are made longer, more well-prepared teachers are to be had, and the public demands better things, I have no doubt that the American schools will give the public all that the latter is willing to pay for.

AIMS AND METHODS IN MODERN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION.[1]

BY WILLIAM R. PRICE, INSPECTOR IN MODERN LANGUAGES, NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

IT has frequently been pointed out that there are three great questions which every teacher must ask and answer for himself, unless his thinking is done for him by his superiors. They are: What? Why? How? — or, as Professor Hanus quotes them: What are you doing? Why are you doing it? Why do you do it like that?[2]

In view of recent changes in the Syllabus of modern languages for the State of New York, it may be wise to ask and answer again these three questions. It is good business policy and consequently (at present!) good educational policy, to "take stock" ever so often. Goethe used to take an intellectual inventory about every five years. So we teachers ought to keep pretty close track of our intellectual assets and liabilities and productive and non-productive investments, in order not to wake up some morning to find ourselves professionally bankrupt.

What are we trying to accomplish in our modern language instruction in the secondary schools? What knowledge or capacity are we seeking to impart?

There was a time when we thought that this, the first of our three questions, had been decided by the *Report of*

[1] Reprinted, with some omissions, from the *Educational Review*.

[2] Cf. "Observations upon Method in the Teaching of Modern Languages," by Professor Calvin Thomas (one of the sanest articles that have ever appeared, but rather in regard to ultimate aims than to details of method). See also *Education* (January, 1911): "The Training of College-bred Teachers," by Professor Paul H. Hanus.

the Committee of Twelve,[1] if not absolutely, as an academic question, at least relatively, for American schools, with a well-defined ultimate aim: the culture and discipline attained through the acquisition of a reading knowledge. It would seem, however, as if that time had passed beyond recall, if we are to accept at its face value the dictum of the superintendent of schools of the largest city in the United States,[2] that "any teaching of a modern language which does not result in the power to speak the language is obviously misdirected teaching."

In the same *Report*, Dr. Maxwell protested that the so-called regents' examinations, by their emphasis upon translation, grammar, and composition, led to the neglect of teaching to speak the modern foreign languages and were, therefore, an injurious use of the examination power. As a direct or indirect result of this *Report*, a scheme has been inaugurated by the State Education Department to remedy this defect, if defect it be, by giving credit in the final examinations for work in speaking.

From this it would seem that we are to attempt, in the future, to teach our pupils to speak the foreign language. We have not done that in the past, at least in the public high schools, first, because we thought the aim impossible of attainment, and second, because we thought that it would be an unwise thing to do, even if we could do it, as it seemed to demand the sacrifice of much worthier aims. The relative values of a speaking and a reading knowledge have never been more forcibly contrasted than in the following paragraph, by one of our foremost American scholars: "For myself, I can say with perfect sincerity that I look upon my own ability to speak German simply as an accomplishment to which I attach no great importance. If such a thing were possible, I would

[1] Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., Revised edition, 1914.

[2] Cf. *Tenth Annual Report of the City Superintendent of Schools*, New York City, 1908, p. 93.

sell it for money, and use the money to buy German books with; and it would not take an exorbitant price to buy it either. But, on the other hand, what I have got from my ability to read German, that is, my debt to the German genius through the German language, I would no more part with than I would part with my memories of the past, my hopes for the future, or any other integral portion of my soul."[1]

Is it possible that these stirring words are no longer true? Has the one-time crushing defeat of the *Sprachmeister* been turned into a glorious victory? That can best be determined from a tabular analysis of the Report adopted by the State Examinations Board, referred to on the previous page, showing the amount of credit assigned to the three or four "abilities" in modern language instruction.

The following are the average relative values placed upon the aims of modern language instruction: —

I. Ability to read and understand the language in print	46⅔ per cent
II. Ability to understand the spoken language	9⅓ per cent
III. Ability to use the language orally (*i.e.*, to speak it)	8⅓ per cent
IV. Ability to use the language in writing	35⅔ per cent

From this summary it is evident that the main emphasis remains where it always has been, namely, on the ability to read and understand the written language. The shifting of part of the emphasis from translation into English to a discussion of the content in the foreign language is not a real departure from the recommendations of the Committee of Twelve. If one really understands a passage in the foreign language, and is given time to think and to choose his words, he can translate it into English if required to do so in an examination. The main thing is that he understand what he is reading, not that he translate it.

A word of explanation might be made about the seemingly low percentage of credit for the ability to understand the

[1] See page 27.

spoken language and the ability to use the language. It should be obvious to any one that these two abilities can never keep pace with the acquisition of linguistic facts and the power to read, understand, and enjoy the written language; it is quite similar to one's ability to read and enjoy poetry of the highest type, without possessing the ability to write original poetry. It is the difference between receptivity and activity, in part, and between reflection, comparison, deduction, as contrasted with the instantaneous impression which the spoken words must make.

The victory of the Radicals, then, in so far as the "What?" and the "Why?" are essentially concerned, is hardly worthy of being called a victory. No one, least of all the authors of the *Report of the Committee of Twelve*, could have any fault to find with this relative valuation of ultimate aims; on the contrary, if I have read their *Report* aright, they welcome any scheme of examination which will insure better teaching of pronunciation and greater familiarity with the language.

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On no subject of the curriculum has so much been written about *method*, as on the subject of modern language instruction. Neglecting what may be called devices and keeping strictly to the question of method, I should say that the main struggle is between the use of the deductive, or traditional Latin method, and the inductive or "Reform" method, "made in Germany." That is evident from the sub-title of Vietor's famous pamphlet (*Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren*), and from one of the common names of the "reform" or "direct" method (*analytisch-synthetisch*). This method really implies a knowledge of the language before it is studied, and has remarkable similarities with the old "natural" method. The vital question, then, is: Shall this method be adopted in our schools, in whole or in part?

It seems to me that the answer to this question depends absolutely upon an identity or similarity of aims, needs, and

conditions in America and in the Fatherland. To argue otherwise would be analogous to arguing for the introduction of universal military service in the United States, because, forsooth, Germany possesses it.

But even in Germany and in continental Europe the new method is not yet firmly established on its throne. Three recent utterances, representing a similar or identical feeling, in three great nations, concerning the educational values of the ancient languages as taught and the modern languages as taught are worthy of careful consideration.

The first of these utterances is the testimony of the French Minister of Education to the inestimable, indispensable, and incomparable value of Latin to all that constitutes French genius — in its lucidity, scope, and elegance.[1]

The second is the voicing, by Mr. William Learned, of an opinion frequently heard in Germany, and familiar to all readers of the *Zeitschrift für französischen und englischen Unterricht* (that wholesome corrective to *Die neueren Sprachen*), namely: "It is still a matter of frequent and vigorous discussion whether the *Oberrealschule*, with its basis of modern languages taught after this fashion, is, after all, a reasonable substitute for the *Gymnasium*, with its more pronounced analytical[2] courses in Latin and Greek, and a feeling is expressed among some of the modern language teachers that a return to the old system or a modification of it may not be far distant."[3]

The third is nearer in time, place, and interest to us: it is the signed statement of a very large number of professors in Cornell University, from all departments of learning, that they prefer students who have had the advantage of a classical education (Latin and Greek) to those who have elected, in their

[1] Cf. *Educational Review*, March, 1911: "The Educational System of France," by Henry A. Perkins. Also *School Review*, June, 1912.

[2] The term is here applied to the language material, with the same meaning as synthetic or deductive when applied to method. See page 101.

[3] Cf. *Educational Review*, April, 1911: "Account of an Exchange Professorship in a German Gymnasium."

preparatory school, French and German, or any other subjects, in place of Latin and Greek.

Need I remind my American colleagues in secondary schools, who may wish to introduce the reform method bodily, of the Italian proverb: *Chi va piano, va sano?*

The reform method in modern language instruction was not recommended by the Committee of Twelve (although it does justice to it, especially in its attention to pronunciation), because its use in our schools would necessitate the postponement of the reading of real literature beyond the secondary period and thus make impossible for ninety per cent of our pupils the attainment of the fundamental aim of the instruction, leaving them, as Professor Hewett expressed it,[1] "The proud possessors of a few sentences, but without any literary knowledge."

To answer this objection and obviate this difficulty some of the American "reformers" have proposed a compression (not a synthesis) of the reform method and the reading method, the "speaking" to be a longer or shorter course introductory to the reading.[2] The attitude of the author in question and his critical acumen are evident in the introductory paragraphs (or should I say *Sentenzen?*). They are as follows: —

"Language comes from *lingua* (tongue), hence language is primarily a form of speech."

"*Sprache* comes from *sprechen*, und eine Sprache ist da, um gesprochen zu werden."

"Written language is merely an epitome of spoken language. The *kennen* must be preceded by the *können*."

"In other words, speaking is not an end, but rather a means to an end."

To these sophistical apothegms one can only reply: Danke für die Belehrung, but I can't follow you; what form of the syllogism is it?

[1] See page 35.

[2] Cf. *Monatshefte für deutsche Sprache und Pädagogik*, 1910, p. 39: "What prominence is to be assigned to the work in speaking the foreign languages."

It seems, however, that the author had in mind the compression into our short courses of the propædeutical part of the reform method and the reading of literature. Right here lies, to my mind, the chief danger to the cause of modern language instruction in America, as long as such instruction is not begun before the secondary period. In Germany this plan could be expected to work very well, because the language is begun early enough and continued long enough to enable the pupils to get a fair mastery of the *Umgangssprache* before taking up the study of the literature. Our courses, however, are not long enough for that, and they will not be of sufficient length until the foreign languages shall dip down two or three years into the grades. If we, therefore, under present conditions, try to attain these two aims, we shall be in the position of the man who tries to kill two birds with one stone and misses both, or of him who tries to occupy two chairs and sits down hard between them.

I doubt whether many high school teachers of the State really know what they are talking about in all this fuss about the direct method. It has become a word to conjure with — an "open sesame" to all the treasures of the foreign language and literature. They speak of it with a respect verging on reverence. They will tell you that they are using it in their classes, perhaps that they introduced it into their school, or that they were pioneers in its American exploitation. They recount before their admiring fellow-teachers how they teach from pictures the life of St. Hieronymus[1] or draw a moral lesson from the picture of the martyrdom of St. Sebastian, or teach the *Umgangssprache* by pantomime, etc., etc. In one class I found a lot of overgrown boys and girls engaged, under expert direction, in the highly practical and educational diversion of counting their fingers in German, after having discovered and formulated, by the inductive method, the reasons

[1] This was actually proposed recently before a large body of modern language teachers.

for their names and the laws governing their relative positions; and it didn't even have the justification of being a Mother Goose rhyme: —

> "Dies ist der Daumen,
> Der schüttelt die Pflaumen," etc.

Granting that the direct method accomplishes all that its enthusiastic advocates claim for it in continental Europe (and that is not by any means proven),[1] there is no real analogy between modern language instruction in an *Oberrealschule* or in the Francfort *Musterschule*, on the one hand, and the American high school on the other, either (1) in the scholarship and pedagogic technique of the teachers, or (2) in the dimensions of the courses, or (3) in the character of the pupils and their attitude towards their work, or (4) in the actual practical and educational needs of the pupils. While the burden of proof would naturally rest upon those who claim the existence of such analogy, I shall nevertheless give here some references and arguments to refute such claims.[2]

[1] Cf. *School Review*, February, 1911: "Visit to the Francfort *Musterschule*," by Mr. Charles Goettsch. — After stressing the purely mechanical feature of endless repetition necessary to produce automatic reaction in speaking the language, the author states that the pupils who finish the course would become good conversationalists "if they spent a year in France or England!" Cf. also *Revue universitaire*, 15 mai, 1910: "Rapport sur la troisième colonie française de vacances en Allemagne (1909) par M. A. Pinloche, professeur au Lycée Michelet," from which the following is quoted (p. 429): "Mais je suis bien obligé de signaler de nouveau aux familles et à nos collègues français le point faible de la plupart de nos colonistes (je ne parle ici que des jeunes gens): c'est leur préparation insuffisante en allemand, qui rend la tâche de leurs professeurs de vacances singulièrement difficile et ingrate, et en même temps leur séjour moins profitable qu'il pourrait et devrait l'être. 'Tous font preuve' nous dit M. Hammelrat, 'd'un manque de sûreté regrettable dans les applications pratique de la grammaire allemande et d'une ignorance surprenante du vocabulaire de la vie quotidienne.'"

[2] Cf. the 1911 Year-Book of the National Education Association. "Literary appreciation in the study of foreign languages: its opportunities and limitations, with special reference to the study of French," by M. Albert Léon Guérard, Assistant Professor of French, Leland Stanford Jr. University: "We should recognize that, while America needs at least as much foreign language study as any European nation, it does not need the same kind. . . .

Mr. John Franklin Brown, in his impressions of the German system of training teachers,[1] after emphasizing the scope and thoroughness of the general academic and university and pedagogical training of prospective teachers, voices his conviction that scholarship is the most important single factor in the excellence of German schools; and he drives home his point by illustrations taken from the equipment of the modern language teacher. What analogy is there between such a preparation, uniform for all teachers, and that of the three score and ten odd types of modern language teachers in America, from the *selbst-importierter Sprachmeister* who failed in his *Staatsexamen* in Germany, to the sweet girl graduate who "specialized" in French in college?

What analogy is there between a course of six or nine years and one of two, three, or four?

What analogy is there between the type of pupil in Germany, for whom a *Fleissfehler* or a *Betragensfehler* is an acute shame and disgrace, and the type of pupil in America, who, if menaced with such a punishment, would most probably cry out, "Make it fifty, Professor!" — Or between a school system where all economic pressure tends to keep a boy in school, where success or failure means success or failure for life, honor in the Fatherland or emigration to America! and one where

There a practical study of our neighbors' language, as it is spoken, is at the same time almost indispensable and comparatively easy. One can hardly move from one's native village without coming across some international boundary. Any Parisian teacher, any ambitious young clerk, any small business man, can easily spend a fortnight's holiday in London; it is only a matter of seven hours and five dollars. . . . On the other hand, America needs the influence of European thought and culture just because she has no immediate neighbor from whom she has much to learn. Thus isolated from the original home of the race, America would run a great risk of becoming provincial — for a province may be as large as a continent. Our duty as teachers of languages and literatures is to open as direct an avenue as possible between European thought and the American public; and I do not believe that Berlitz French is the straightest and widest avenue that could thus be opened. My contention is this . . . let us teach French mainly for reading purposes."

[1] Cf. *School Review*, 1910.

all economic pressure tends to force the boy out of school at the age of fourteen or sixteen? Furthermore, the policy in the *Musterschule* (and doubtless in other schools in Germany) is to have the same modern language teacher carry a class all the way through the course; compare that with our classes, which shrink so every term that three or four have to be combined into one. In a large New York City high school there are about twelve hundred pupils taking German; about eight hundred of them are in the first year of instruction!

Finally, the European boy or girl begins the study of a modern foreign language much earlier than do our pupils, and the method which is best suited psychologically, not to speak of other reasons, to them, is not by any means best suited to our pupils. For one thing, what is interesting and amusing at the age of nine or ten is apt to be considered childish and *geisttötend* at twelve or fourteen.

If this is so, and who will deny it? what question can there be of the introduction of the direct method into our schools? In my opinion, none whatever.

What change in method, then, does the Resolution of the State Examinations Board contemplate?

The answer to this question will be evident to any one who has seen much of the teaching of modern languages in the schools of the State. The usual type of recitation is summed up by the formula: "Jack read; John translate; Mary explain the syntax of. . . ." Very often the foreign language is not even read; and if it is, no attention is paid to vowel-quantity, accentuation, intonation and expression, proper grouping of words; on the contrary, the reading is as crude and painful as pulling teeth. Very frequently the teacher has had but two or three courses in grammar and translation in college and is utterly incompetent to do more than to conduct a translation exercise. It is to remedy such glaring defects that the Resolution was passed; it is hoped that it will awaken school authorities to the necessity of getting ade-

quately prepared teachers for the foreign languages and send inadequately prepared teachers scurrying to summer schools and to Europe to perfect themselves in the foreign languages. Viewed from this standpoint, no legislation of the State Department in recent years is so important and far-reaching in potential results.

The hardest thing to get teachers to realize is this: that no extra time is necessary for the kind of work contemplated by the changes in the Syllabus. Most teachers look upon the oral work as something on the side, something extraneous. They think of the German language, for example, as composed of air-tight compartments: pronunciation and reading is one; translation is another; grammar, another; conversation, another. So they have separate days for these phases of work, as though they were unrelated. They compare the oral work to the laboratory work in the sciences: two periods of laboratory work equal one period of recitation on the text-book, therefore two periods of conversation should be provided by lopping off from the other work. The result is that the pupil fails to see the relation between grammar, reading, conversation, translation; it is often as though he were studying, under these names, unrelated subjects.

It is right here that the wisdom of the *Report of the Committee of Twelve* is most apparent: the reading should be the centre of the instruction, it says; and this truth cannot too often be driven home to teachers. Not until they look upon the reading (which does not at all mean of necessity translation) as the hub of the modern language wheel, on which all phases of linguistic work converge like the actual spokes of an actual wheel, will they have the proper perspective in their teaching.

I do not believe that the scope and general character of the reading material should be changed, although the first reader may well partake of the nature of the German reform readers. I believe that we can accomplish just as much in the future

as we have in the past, and in addition to that, I believe that we can make a lot of the French and German pass over from the passive, receptive stage into the active stage. To accomplish this, three things should be required of pupils in the preparation of every reading lesson: (1) they should read the French or German aloud; (2) they should translate it into English, as a home task; (3) they should prepare the French or German text so as to be able to answer in French or German any questions in French or German on the content and form of the assigned reading.

To make the conversation centre in and revolve about the texts read has three great advantages: —

First: There is the essential element of reality about such conversation, so utterly lacking when teachers and pupils try to converse about pictures and topics for which they have not learned an adequate vocabulary. It is true that special books have been written for this purpose, but they are generally either puerile or wooden or both.

Second: It does not necessitate the cutting down of the amount or general character of the reading, as some teachers have proposed,[1] but increases the amount of possible reading, because (*a*) it makes pupils learn the French or German in addition to the translation, thus gradually doing away with a lot of useless thumbing of the dictionary, and (*b*) by taking the place of much useless class-room translation it saves time for sight reading (which should not be confused with sight translation). In addition it does away with the use of "ponies" and interlineation of books with English words, because the pupil must show (*a*) by his reading, and (*b*) by his answers in the foreign language that he understands what he has prepared at home.

Third: It enables the teacher who is not "to the manner born" to conduct every reading lesson in French or German, for any teacher who has a good pronunciation and a good

[1] Cf. Article by W. Betz, *School Review*, June, 1911.

knowledge of the grammar can formulate simple questions on the form and content of the reading lesson. If need be she can write them out at home and memorize them. Such a teacher is likely to formulate questions-with-a-purpose, rather than to use aimless conversational phrases about trivial things. I have seen excellent recitations conducted in this way, with a lot of *lebendige Grammatik*, by teachers who had no real independent speaking-knowledge of the language taught.

The psychological and logical reasons for a lot of oral work such as is here proposed are not far to seek. Certain things in a foreign language simply have to be learned by heart and retained. Association from all sensory-motor vantage points is more effective in this memorizing and retention than from one alone.[1] Some sounds will necessarily be associated with words; let them be, therefore, the correct ones. That means very thorough drill in pronunciation and practice in reading aloud, extending over the entire course.

Literature, especially poetry, loses much if read silently or if read aloud poorly; there can be no real appreciation of French or German poetry except through proper oral reading. That is just why foreigners fail to appreciate French poetry, for example.

Grammar is always more or less meaningless until it has been exemplified in actual use so often that the correct usage becomes automatic. This intimate relation of grammar and reading cannot well be established by aimless conversation. It is for that reason that I value chiefly oral work based upon the reading text.

With the plan of work here proposed it will not be necessary to sacrifice one whit of the discipline and culture which

[1] Cf. *School Review*, 1909: "The Phonetic Method," by Professor A. Gideon (an excellent short account, showing clearly what features of this method are of value in our practice, and why).

we have set up as the ultimate aim of modern language instruction; on the contrary, I feel confident that we shall better attain our aim, while, in addition, we shall be laying a foundation in speaking on which the few, who may continue their studies abroad or in our colleges, can readily build.

THE TEACHING OF FRENCH AND GERMAN IN OUR PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS.[1]

BY PROFESSOR C. H. GRANDGENT, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, WHEN DIRECTOR OF MODERN LANGUAGES IN THE BOSTON SCHOOLS.

By "our" schools I mean those of Massachusetts; and when I say "high schools," I am thinking especially of institutions that are not engaged in preparing pupils for college entrance examinations. Let us take it for granted, further, that a foreign language occupies, in the average high school course, some three hours a week for three years. It is obvious enough that we cannot do everything in this time: we are obliged to devote ourselves particularly to some one part of the subject, and our choice must be determined, in the first place, by our possibilities, and, next, by the purpose we have in mind. My intention is to examine briefly the five chief branches of modern language study, with a view to ascertaining which of them we can teach, and which of these latter we can most profitably pursue. I shall consider the five topics in the following order: speaking, writing, grammar, translation, reading.

First comes speaking. I am often asked: "Can we teach pupils to talk French and German?" Let us see. We know that the ability to use a language for the purpose of communicating ideas can be gained only through long-continued practice. The ear, the vocal organs, the memory, the reason-

[1] Read at meeting of Massachusetts Association of Classical and High School Teachers, December, 1891. Reprinted from *School and College*, with the permission of the publishers.

ing powers, the will, must all receive a special and thorough training. Hearing others speak will not do: we must speak ourselves. This is a case, if there ever was one, where the motto *fit fabricando faber* exactly hits the nail on the head. Now let us suppose that a class of twenty-five pupils, neglecting all else, spends its whole time in "conversation;" let us say that each recitation period consists of fifty minutes, and that the class recites three times a week; let us suppose, also, for the sake of the argument, that the instructor talks only half of the time. What is the result? If the hours are equitably divided, every pupil speaks for three minutes a week, or two hours yearly, or a quarter of a day during his entire public school career. When we reflect that it takes us, with fully an hour's exercise *per diem*, ten or fifteen years to master our native tongue, we can perhaps estimate the amount of skill that is to be produced by six-hours' practice scattered over a term of three years. It will then be unnecessary to discuss the question whether or not the ability to speak French or German is a desirable and proper object for a public school course. By all this I do not, in the least, intend to discourage the use of a foreign language in the class-room: my only purpose is to show that we cannot make speaking our chief aim, and that we must accept this fact once for all, and shape our methods accordingly. If, however, so-called "conversation" ought not to be regarded as an end in itself, it is certainly a most valuable auxiliary. There are at least four reasons why we should cultivate it: in the first place, it satisfies a frequently expressed desire on the part of the public, and as the public supports the schools, its wishes should be heeded; secondly, classes do not correctly appreciate what they read (especially if their text is either metrical in form or colloquial in style) unless they know how it sounds; thirdly, the actual use of the foreign tongue invariably interests the pupils, giving them a sense of mastery that nothing else can bring; and, lastly, exercises of this kind stimulate

the teacher to more extended study and greater mental activity. I should say, therefore, to those instructors who have a practical command of the language they teach, "Use it as much as possible in school, but do not waste time on it. If you have something to tell the class, say it in the foreign tongue whenever you think you will be understood without long explanation or tiresome repetitions. Encourage the scholars to express themselves in the same language as soon and as often as they can. Always, and particularly at the outset, insist on the best pronunciation attainable. Begin, as a rule, with simple and not too numerous French or German sentences containing no new words, and decrease, month by month, the proportion of English spoken. You will find that during the last year the greater part of your instruction can be imparted in the language you are studying." Teachers who cannot speak German or French I should earnestly advise to learn to do so as quickly as possible, but not to experiment on the class until they have acquired a fair degree of fluency and correctness.

We now come to our second subject, writing. It might naturally occur to us that if we devoted most of our energies to composition, we could, perhaps, give our scholars a kind of training admirably adapted to the development of their reasoning faculties, and, at the same time, fix in their minds the most important facts of the language. Of course, however, we do not wish to make writing our specialty unless we can teach pupils to write well; otherwise we shall have too little to show for our three-years' labor. Now, before students can learn to write properly, they must have collected the materials: they should have read a large amount of French or German, and they must have gained a clear and complete knowledge of the necessary points of grammar. The former of these requirements is often neglected by teachers, but it is, in my opinion, the more important of the two. All our talking and writing of foreign tongues, so far as it is correct, is almost

wholly a matter of imitation: we are never sure that any expression we may wish to use is right, unless we have seen or heard it before; and generally we must meet with a word or phrase many times, and examine it from several points of view, before we feel that we are on speaking terms with it. I think it would be no exaggeration to say that if we spent all our three years on translation and grammar, our best pupils would, at the end of that time, be just in proper condition to begin serious work in composition. Writing must, therefore, like speaking, be considered, in our high school course, as a side issue. It is, nevertheless, an indispensable auxiliary to grammar study, and, if intelligently conducted, a wonderful aid to reading and translation.

At first sight it would seem that grammar, our third topic, might well be made the principal theme of our modern language curriculum. If carefully pursued throughout the course, with enough reading and writing to illustrate its principles, it would furnish a good instrument for training the intelligence, and provide a subject that ought to be thoroughly learned, by diligent and fairly able scholars, in three years. "By diligent and fairly able scholars" — alas! this qualifying phrase opens our eyes to a weakness in the argument. For it is a fact, shown not by ratiocination, but by experience, that our pupils, when obliged to study grammar, are neither "diligent" nor "fairly able": they are, generally speaking, stupid and indolent beyond all endurance. Why? Simply because they dislike it. However pleasing grammar may appear to the philologist, who sees it in perspective, the schoolboy, for whom it is merely a collection of paradigms, formulas, and exceptions, finds it intolerably dry; and the schoolboy cannot do his best work unless he is interested. Here and there an instructor may exist sufficiently enthusiastic and discriminating to make the subject attractive; but I fear that most of our teachers are scarcely more fond of the science, for its own sake, than are the pupils themselves. Yet we must have

some grammar; else we can expect no accurate knowledge of the language. There seems to be but one way out of the dilemma: to teach only the essentials; to administer this necessary amount in small and well-graded doses, alternating with lessons of a different character; and to emphasize its utility and relieve its dulness by means of close association with interesting composition work and agreeable reading matter.

Translation and reading, as I use the terms, are not quite the same thing. The chief objects of the former are mental discipline and training in English; the main purpose of the latter is general culture, to be attained through the intelligent perusal of the greatest possible number of good foreign books. Yet the two cannot be entirely separated: reading must begin by translation; and it is equally true that the thoughtful translation of literary masterpieces cannot fail to refine the taste. In either case we must be sure to select works that are excellent in themselves, and can be readily appreciated by the scholars; we should study with the same care the differences of idiom between the two languages; and, whatever may be our aim, we ought never to be satisfied with inaccurate or awkward English versions. In these respects the two methods are identical. It is, in fact, rather two ideals that we have to distinguish. We may, on the one hand, direct all our labors toward the development of the reason; in this case we shall have a course consisting of carefully corrected translation, a maximum of grammar and composition, and comparatively little speaking. If, on the other hand, the end we have in view is the broadening of the mind and the cultivation of the taste, we shall have, perhaps, more translation and conversation and somewhat less writing and grammar; and we shall strive to train our pupils in such a manner that they can, before the end of the three years, absorb thought directly through the foreign medium, without the interposition of English. Both of these objects — mental discipline and general culture

— are so desirable that no complete course can wholly neglect either of them; and if lack of time compels us partially to sacrifice one to the other, we may not find the choice easy. The following considerations seem to me to be of weight. In our public schools most of the work appears to be calculated to fit young persons rather to meet the rude exigencies of life than to enjoy its good things: this is doubtless right; but the strictly practical side of education is not the only one that deserves attention. When foreigners criticise us Americans, they say we are intelligent, quick, inventive, but lacking in refinement and artistic taste; and I think there is much truth in their judgment. Now, refinement and taste are necessary factors of civilization: we cannot afford to pass by any opportunity to cultivate them; and how can they be more readily developed than by the study of literature? We already have a somewhat meagre course of reading in English; but this, even if it were far more extended, could never be half so effective in overthrowing prejudices, suggesting ideas, opening new vistas, and forming correct standards, as is the intercourse with great minds of other countries. I am, therefore, inclined to say that a French or German course does not fulfil its true mission until it affords pupils at least an introduction to the best literature of the language they are learning.

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON MODERN LANGUAGES, NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION.[1]

ABSTRACT

SERVICE to the pupil determines the aims of instruction. Work must at all times be of value both to those who are to leave the class and to those who will continue in it. The aims of the first year are phonetic training, knowledge of the fundamental principles of language, and interest in the foreign nation whose language is studied. Pupils with neither taste nor capacity for studying a foreign language should drop it after the first year. Oral work and accurate pronunciation should from the beginning receive the most careful attention. The method used depends somewhat on the equipment of the teacher, but it should train ear, eye, tongue, and hand.

The first texts should be of the simplest kind and should arouse an interest in the life of the foreign people. The work may include copying text, with minor variations of person, number, tense, etc.; writing from dictation; reading aloud; translation, oral and written, both from and into the foreign language; reproduction; paraphrasing; imitative and free composition. Texts should be modern in style, not too long, distinctively national in character, adapted to the age, sex, and thought of the pupil, and they should give something worth remembering. Grammar should be the handmaid of the text, which should be the centre of all instruction. In translation, thought should intervene between the two languages, being derived from the first and expressed by the second.

[1] A report made at the annual meeting in July, 1914.

In proportion to the time allowed, modern language instruction in our best schools is as good as that abroad, but we need more good teachers and an opportunity for selected pupils to begin the study of a foreign language, under competent instruction, in the grades. The colleges should give especial attention to preparing teachers of modern languages, and the cities should grant Sabbatical years with half pay to teachers who will go to the expense of study abroad.

I. AIMS.

Service to the pupil is the great object of the work of this committee. In accordance therewith, valid aims are defined as those which seek to meet the needs of real pupils, as we actually find them, and a satisfactory method must give such pupils, in proper sequence and quantity, what they need to receive. We must so arrange the work that at every point it may be profitable for those taking it, giving to all a general appreciation of the subject, attaining for all who continue the language beyond the introductory stage satisfactory power in certain particulars, and securing a useful degree of skill for those by whom such skill may be needed. The first work should be so chosen that those who drop the subject early shall retain something of value for themselves while impeding as little as possible the progress of others who are laying the foundation for future study, and a determining factor in deciding the order of procedure should be the principle that the work that makes for skill not generally needed and difficult of attainment should be reserved for later study and for especially gifted pupils.

Certain features of modern language work may be eliminated at once from the list of reasonable aims for the pupil who expects to drop his language study early, either because he must leave school or because his individual powers or lack of power make it advantageous for him to use his time in other

ways. Such a pupil can expect neither to read nor to speak the language; a mere parrot-like knowledge that a German calls "die Tür," and a Frenchman "la porte," a thing known to the pupil as "the door," is likely to be soon forgotten and to have no value either "practical" or educational. He cannot hope to gain either skill or power in most phases of the subject, and for him we must choose work in which the field is so restricted that diligent study for even a short time may secure some satisfactory achievement, and in which the training received will extend to other interests and develop the child along lines not directly connected with the language itself. Yet this work must also be profitable for those who expect to go farther, and must therefore be a good foundation for future advanced work.

Three aims of modern language instruction seem to meet perfectly these requirements, which at first appear so hard to reconcile. They are:

(1) To secure a reasonable degree of phonetic accuracy and lead the pupil to feel its importance.

For the child, speech has been a more or less unconscious process. With the study of a foreign language he should discover the necessity of making sounds and their formation the object of careful attention. He should gain thereby a conscious control of his speech organs; should develop his power to use them as he wills; should learn to feel the significance of sound distinctions, and to enunciate clearly whenever he speaks. The slovenly mumbling that so often passes for English speech sufficiently emphasizes the need of this.

(2) To teach precision in the use of words and to give a clear understanding of grammatical relations and of the common terms which state them, showing why such terms are necessary.

The child's own language has been so much a part of his very being that it is extremely difficult for him to look upon it as a proper object of study. The normal child feels competent,

without any rules, to speak in a perfectly satisfactory way. And if well born and reared he ought to be. To learn to employ the terms of grammar seems to him a most unnecessary and foolish thing. After reading or hearing that John struck James, he gains no further information by being told that John is the subject of the sentence; and he cannot conceive of any human being so stupid that he must be told that John is the subject, before knowing which boy struck the other. When he knows offhand how words go together, why should he learn strange, odd-sounding terms to explain relations which to him need no explanation? That is the puzzling mystery which very often befogs the boy who "can't understand grammar." He is confused by the attempt to explain to him by mysterious vocables what seems perfectly clear without any explanation. In the case of a foreign language, the child comes easily to see the need and the use of grammar, if from the beginning it is made, what it should be, the handmaid of the text.

Vagueness of the thought associated with a word is even more common than faulty enunciation. The study of the foreign language shows the importance of knowing the exact meaning of words and of using them with care.

(3) To stimulate the pupil's interest in the foreign nation, leading him to perceive that the strange sounds are but new ways of communicating thoughts quite like his own; showing him by the close resemblances in words and viewpoints that the German and the Frenchman are his kinsmen, with interests, ambitions, and hopes like his own; revealing to him that their tales can give him pleasure, their wisdom can enlighten him.

For every sort of pupil this work can be made profitable, and in most cases entertaining. Affording an excellent foundation for future study, it is valuable alike for the pupil who drops out early in the course and for him who is to make a specialty of language work. These aims, moreover, do not

imply the completion of any definite amount of work before the child can profit by what he learns, nor do they require the application of any particular method. While keeping them constantly in mind, we may stress the substantive with the "natural" and the "picture and object" schools, or we may attack the verb first with the followers of Gouin and the "psychological" method. The same ends may be sought with a class that can rapidly acquire a large vocabulary and attain a considerable command of inflectional forms and with a class of immature beginners whose progress must be slow. The closest application to these aims is compatible with a very great variety in details of method.

The end of the first year should be marked by the elimination of those who are unprepared to continue modern language study in a somewhat serious and determined way. The most moderate achievement in learning a foreign language implies persistent application to tasks not wholly pleasant, alertness of mind and retentiveness of memory, the building of a unified structure, each part of which must rest on previous work well done. In a modern language such achievement must include at least the power to read an ordinary book rapidly, intelligently, and without too frequent recourse to the dictionary. Attainment short of this is practically useless, and the pupil who is not to reach this stage had better drop his French or German at the end of the first year and use his time for other things. In a well-rounded course, satisfactory achievement should include also the ability to understand the foreign language, when spoken distinctly, and the ability to express simple thought orally or in writing. In general, after the preliminary year, two years of further study will be needed for acceptable results.

In his fourth year of study, the high school pupil is mature enough and should have had experience enough in dealing with abstract notions to profit by a somewhat careful consideration of the fundamental principles of grammar and composition, as

illustrated in both the foreign language and his own. Attention may be called to the literary quality of the texts read, and the development of an appreciation of good literature and of a taste therefor is a proper aim of general value.

The texts of the fourth year may be chosen to give particular power in the rapid reading of special material: commercial texts and business correspondence for the pupil who expects to enter commercial life; scientific French or German for him who expects to go to a technical school. In general, however, the work will be merely a continuation and extension of that of the preceding two years, introducing more difficult texts and more rapid reading; adopting a more scholarly and critical attitude toward questions of grammar and style; making the foreign language largely, perhaps almost entirely, the language of the class; demanding more initiative and a larger independence on the part of the pupil, yet being ever mindful of Goethe's line, "Bedenkt ihr habet weiches Holz zu spalten."

In seeking to attain the special ends for which any subject is peculiarly well adapted, the real teacher will ever bear in mind those general aims that are indispensable in all teaching that is worthy to be called education. Habits of industry, concentration, accurate observation, intelligent discrimination, systematic arrangement and presentation, careful memorizing, independent thinking, so far outweigh the advantages gained merely by knowing something about a particular topic that they are perhaps too generally assumed to be universal, and, like the air we breathe or the water we drink, are sometimes forgotten or neglected. The personality of the teacher and the manner in which he works, rather than the subject he teaches or the method he uses, will make for those elements which, after all, are the great objects of secondary education, the business of which is indeed to impart knowledge that is likely to be useful, but far more to develop in the child those tastes, powers, and habits that fit for happy, efficient living.

II. METHOD.

Only one reasonable explanation can be given for the persistency of the conflict among different methods of teaching foreign languages. It is that each method which has won any considerable favor has in it elements of good, and has secured results which seemed desirable to those who used the method; indeed, we may perhaps go farther and say that the worst of a dozen methods, employed by a strong teacher with underlying purpose well in mind, will give a more valuable training and better results than any method when employed by an inferior teacher. It is probable, too, that one method is better than another for doing some things, but less effective in securing a different end or ends, so that the aim which seems most important will determine the method to use in a particular case. Doubtless, too, the equipment of certain teachers makes it possible for them to work best with a method which a different teacher would not wisely choose. Instead, then, of trying to lay out in detail the "best method," we should consider various methods that have been found good, endeavor to see wherein their merit lies, and to decide what method seems especially well suited to various conditions and to different types of classes or teachers. In the Report of the Committee of Twelve of the Modern Language Association of America (D. C. Heath & Co.), Section III, entitled "A critical review of methods of teaching," has well outlined the chief methods and their characteristic features; and we shall assume that the reader is familiar with that report, which has been the guide and standard of modern language instruction in the United States. It is thought, however, that improved conditions make it now possible to take a somewhat more advanced position than was advisable in 1898.

Methods may be classified as "direct," which seek to eliminate the mother tongue, endeavoring from the beginning to associate directly the thought and the foreign expression; and

"indirect," that base their work on the child's knowledge of his own language and depend largely on preliminary grammatical instruction, translation, and explanation in the vernacular. Few advocates of direct methods are now so extreme as to reject all use of the mother tongue; nor would any good teacher who uses in general an indirect method fail to employ many devices for getting direct association of thought and the foreign speech. The grammatical and the reading methods may be called indirect; the phonetic, which has grown into the "new" or "reform" (often now spoken of as "the direct" method), the Gouin or psychological, and the natural, Heness-Sauveur or Berlitz methods, may be called direct. A hard and fast line could scarcely be drawn, however. Some teachers who begin with a grammatical or a reading method use the foreign language largely in their later work, while many of the best exponents of the reform or of the Gouin methods do not hesitate to employ the mother tongue freely at first in stimulating the pupil to the thought desired.

As aims suitable for the first year, we have mentioned phonetic accuracy, grammatical comprehension, and interest in the foreign nation. To secure the first, a very large amount of oral drill is essential. It is necessary, moreover, that this drill aim at accuracy and not at the slipshod approximations that make the results of some attempts to use a direct method as unsatisfactory from a phonetic as from a grammatical standpoint. As pupils grow older and their imitative faculties become less acute, more attention must be given to the vocal organs and to the theory of sound formation; the relations of sounds and the distinctions between them must be more carefully explained, and a larger amount of phonetic drill is required. Neglect of this is fatal. The unfortunates who are allowed to become fluent in ill-pronounced French or German never recover; their sound perceptions are blurred, instead of being educated; the only compensation is that they themselves are mercifully unconscious of the suffering which their vocal

atrocities inflict upon others. The man trained by the grammatical method usually knows that he cannot pronounce, and so does not attempt it; the badly trained victim of a superficial conversational method flays complacently the unhappy language. A teacher who cannot pronounce well, but is, unfortunately, compelled to teach, does less harm, therefore, by omitting pronunciation as completely as possible than by teaching a pronunciation that is a bad habit likely to persist. Good teaching, however, implies a well-equipped teacher, and a good pronunciation is fundamental.

The care with which pronunciation is taught should extend to the English as well as to the French or German; the immediate result of the work will be well-spoken French or German, but the educational value in a wider sense should be an appreciation of the beauty of clearly enunciated, distinct speech in general, the habit of noticing sounds and inflections, and a desire to speak well.

For teaching pronunciation, some prefer phonetic texts, but a majority of our best teachers do not feel this to be necessary. Some would use them for French, but not for German or Spanish. Nothing like a course in phonetics should be attempted in teaching a foreign language in a high school, but, where mere imitation fails, a teacher with phonetic training can at times give briefly helpful directions for making certain sounds and for appreciating sound distinctions. There should be much distinct speaking by the teacher; repetition in unison and singly by the pupils; unwearying drill until the sounds are right and the swing of the word group well imitated. Most important are the vowels; consonants are more easily acquired. Separate sounds, syllables, words, and phrases must all be practised. In time the foreign idiom should become the usual language of the class, and even seem a natural means of communication between teacher and pupil outside the class.

With the aim of accurate pronunciation always in mind, the particular material treated is relatively unimportant. As

speedily and completely as possible, thought and sound should be directly joined, but whether the stimulus to the thought should be primarily an object, a gesture, a picture, or a book, is a question that may well be left to the discretion of the teacher. The best practice is probably to employ, as far as time allows, every available means, separately and in combination, to impress permanently and together thought and sound, written sign and muscular movement. Ear and eye, tongue and hand, should be in constant interaction with the busy brain, each exciting and aiding the others. Undoubtedly a normal spelling makes for a wrong pronunciation no less in the foreign language than in our own, but until men adopt everywhere a phonetic alphabet and spelling we shall be obliged to associate words as sounded with their signs as normally printed or written, and it is a fair question when this association should begin. In teaching a foreign language, the sound should certainly come first; it should be practised and repeated in connection with the thought until it is likely to be remembered, and then only is it safe to associate the word with the conventional spelling.

Whatever be the method employed, grammatical comprehension is demanded as soon as the words are grouped so as to express real thought. Fundamental concepts of action and actor, subject and object of a verb, adjectival and adverbial modifiers, the connectives of speech, various modes and times of action, etc., must be brought out with a clearness that in a child's mind is often absent, dormant, or vague in connection with the mother tongue. That inflectional forms are often necessary to express these varying concepts is not infrequently a discovery for the pupil, and the fact should give the concepts greater definiteness and importance in his mind. In the real education of the boy, clarifying and classifying these concepts and getting him to regard language objectively and to appreciate to some extent its mechanism, is far more important than the mere acquisition of a foreign tongue. So from the begin-

ning, sentence structure should be so presented that the elements of the word group stand out in their proper relations, and that the inflectional forms carry with them a comprehension of those relations. Whatever be the method, the word groups presented should be simple enough to insure correct understanding of grammatical relations (syntax), progress should be sufficiently slow for the pupil to fix one form before others are introduced, and abundant swift illustrations, chiefly oral, each as short as possible, should spike together correct pronunciation and correct feeling for inflectional forms. Here, too, effective work must at the same time build a firm founda tion for the new language and develop an appreciation of gen eral speech-truths that will make the course profitable for him who drops out of the class as well as for him who continues therein. In arithmetic abstruse problems have no proper place with beginners; so, in language study, simple sentences with limited vocabulary and frequent repetitions should furnish the material for the first year. Long, complicated sentences, like puzzle problems, are an entertaining and perhaps profitable exercise for those who have a taste for them; but it is certain that we rarely have to deal with such problems, and, if a pupil is not naturally clever in solving them, forcing him to attempt them involves a most unprofitable expenditure of time and energy.

Among general truths of language, the importance of word order and the great significance of the pause, with its effect on what immediately precedes or follows, need to be especially studied by the pupil and in some cases, perhaps, pondered long and carefully by the teacher.

III. MATERIAL.

There exists a very wide difference of opinion as to the choice of material to be used with beginners. Aside from classes that for the first year study the grammar only — may their number ever grow less — the texts used may be roughly classified as:

(1) Conversation manuals, based on daily life, foreign travel, etc.

(2) Selections from historical or scientific readings, regarded as having intrinsic value.

(3) Fiction, fairy tales, etc., regarded as having little intrinsic value, but suited to interest and attract the pupil.

(4) Texts of literary reputation, as *Télémaque*.

However varying tastes and circumstances may influence the decision among these groups, it is reasonable to assume that the nation whose history, literature, or commercial importance makes its language worth studying should have elements of interest for every intelligent person, and that arousing this interest must play an important part both in opening a field of wholesome enjoyment and in stimulating a desire to continue the subject gladly and diligently. Since beginners cannot be expected to have enough comprehension of a new language to appreciate literary style, and since high school freshmen ought not to have had experiences that fit them really to feel great literature, most texts of literary reputation should be absolutely eliminated from first-year work. In choosing from the other three groups, phonetic and grammatical ends seem to be as well served by one as by another. The choice may therefore depend on our third aim — arousing an interest in the foreign nation. For this aim, scientific reading must be of the simplest type, dealing with such topics as the geography or the inventions of the nation; historical selections must be equally simple and should deal with the popular features of the nation's history; and with most pupils this material can be used only sparingly without loss of interest. Some pupils look with scorn upon the fairy tale as beneath their dignity. This attitude is often merely a pose, and the folk tale especially has qualities of human interest that, when set off by local color, rarely fail to attract old as well as young readers. Fiction exclusively, however, is apt to create an impression that the work is not of a serious nature.

There remains the field of *realien*, real things about the actual life of the people, and it is probably wise to draw upon this source for most of the material for the first year, as it combines the advantages of general interest with a feeling that what is read is of a real and substantial nature. An ideal text for the first year might then be described as one that, constantly employing the simplest expressions and constructions, gives attractive glimpses of the common life and scenes in the foreign land, with bits of its history, natural features, inventions, and folklore. The "guidebook" type must, however, be avoided as uninteresting to the large number of our pupils who expect never to travel abroad.

IV. DETAILS OF PROCEDURE.

Having agreed that our first aims should be phonetic training, grammatical comprehension, and interest in the foreign nation, and that our text should treat largely of the life of the people and be of the simplest type, we come next to the question of details in the treatment of this material. Experience indicates that in this respect no universal agreement can be secured, but certain general principles of procedure may be suggested and certain dangers of common practice may be pointed out.

First, the time devoted at the beginning to learning accurately the sounds of the new language is usually quite insufficient. It would be advantageous if an arrangement could be made by which for several weeks no home study would be assigned in a foreign language, allowing teachers of other subjects to utilize that time in exchange for class-room time. In this way all work done in the new language might be done in class and under the direction of the teacher. If home lessons must be assigned during those first few weeks, they should be such as to involve the least possible danger of fixing wrong speech habits. The use of phonetic script probably makes it possible to assign home work with less danger of associating wrong

sounds with the normal spelling. If it is not thought wise to use the phonetic script, keep the vocabulary small, repeat the same words again and again with all the variety of simple, real uses that the ingenuity of the teacher can discover; let home work include nothing that has not been exhaustively worked over in class. Much copying of text and writing out at home the most useful inflections of a very large number of words will fill up the time out of class that some teachers feel obliged to demand lest pupils get at first the unfortunate impression that the new study is a "cinch." This copying of text, varied as soon as possible by changes of person, number, tense, etc., is a good introduction to the writing from dictation which should be soon begun and diligently practised.

Many fierce battles have been waged over the question of translation. It is probable that translation cannot possibly be avoided in the earlier stages of study. A child cannot see a familiar object without having the name by which he has known it flash instantly into his mind. A thought is bound to seek expression in the language with which similar thoughts have been most closely associated, and, once formulated in this language, subsequent expressions of that thought will be more or less a translation. As it is always best to face facts as they are and to reckon with them, no matter how displeasing they may be, the wise procedure here is probably to attack translation early and try to teach pupils how a translation ought to be made, passing from one language to thought, and from the thought to its expression in the second language. Left to himself, a pupil will certainly translate, and he is equally certain to do it wrongly, substituting English words for those of the text, and then guessing the meaning from the English (?) result. The two languages are the two slices of bread in a linguistic sandwich, and they should always be separated by a filling of meaty thought, so that the words of each language are in direct contact with the thought and not with each other. This insistence on joining thought and sound should

apply as well to all use of the mother tongue, and failure in this respect accounts for many of the stupid utterances so common in our class-rooms.

Using a vocabulary should mean more than merely finding an English substitute for the foreign word. The second and most important part of the process is visualizing or otherwise securing a clear and definite concept of what is meant, then associating permanently this concept, and not the English word with the foreign word. If this association of concept and foreign word can be secured as swiftly and certainly without the intervention of English, the English, of course, is superfluous; but, if English is the quickest and most convenient means of securing this association, there seems to be no valid reason for depriving ourselves of its aid. Only, with or without English, we must not fail to attain as our result a direct and accurate association of thought and the foreign word.

Here the Gouin-Bétis or psychological method differs widely from the extreme types of "natural" methods, which, in the attempt to create an atmosphere of foreign thought, rigorously exclude all English. In teaching *pendule*, for instance, Bétis did not show the pupils a clock, neither was he satisfied with merely saying "clock," but he cleverly used English to lead the class to visualize various types of clock known as *pendule*, and left them with a clear and abiding knowledge of the word. So, in a class of beginners, Walter, who has adopted many of Gouin's suggestions, uses the mother tongue freely in asssociating clear and correct concepts with the new word he is teaching. If then we finally get the direct association which we desire, we see that the question whether English is or is not excluded becomes an unessential detail of procedure and is largely a matter of economy of time. When the pupil's equipment fits him to understand an explanation in French as well as one in English, use the French, for with equal thought content an hour of French alone is better prac-

tice in learning French than an hour half French and half English.

Reference to the Gouin and the natural methods suggests another wide difference between them, in which the truth lies with neither extreme. For Gouin, the verb and the verb series are the soul of speech; for the natural methods, all revolves about the substantive, the tangible thing, that can be seen and shown in connection with the new word presented. In truth, verb and noun must go hand in hand, for an actor without action is as sterile as an action without an actor is unthinkable. In any concrete example, word order and the construction of the sentence will show which is the more important in the mind of the speaker and which must be emphasized as the better key to his meaning.

Among other processes that are commonly employed, we may mention grammatical study, reading aloud, writing from dictation, conversation, translation from and into the foreign language (version and theme), reproduction orally or in writing, paraphrasing, composition based on the text, and free composition. It is not intended to say what processes should be used or how they should be combined by any teacher, but the following suggestions are offered for making as effective as possible whatever work the teacher may decide to undertake.

Grammar can be regarded as an end by the philologist only. For all pupils in a secondary school it must be the handmaid of the text and must be regarded as existing solely in order to make clearer the language which it serves. The need of a rule and its application should be apparent to the pupil before he is required to learn the rule; words should be seen in use with a context before they are classified and memorized; the force of an inflection should be made plain from its use in a word group before the pupil is asked to inflect the paradigm; and in the unceasing repetition necessary to fix inflectional forms care should be taken that they are never parrot-like

repetitions, devoid of thought. Make the text the centre of all instruction; base upon it grammar, conversation, and composition; and the grammatical knowledge derived from the text as a model will be applied intelligently in written and oral expression.

Reading aloud — now too much neglected in the mother tongue — should be a favorite exercise. With large classes no drill is so effective in teaching pronunciation as reading in unison after the teacher. In later work intelligent reading aloud is helpful in fixing the foreign language in the memory; it may take the place of translation where the simple character of the text and the manner of reading give sufficient evidence that the meaning is clear; and the practice is enjoyable and useful to those who form the habit of reading aloud in their own study.

Writing from dictation has always been much employed in French schools for French children learning their own language, and it is much to be commended. While less difficult than reproduction or paraphrasing, it is an admirable test of the care with which a passage has been studied, and the dictation of unseen passages is an excellent criterion of the pupil's ability to understand the spoken language. Dictation may begin early in the course, and until the very end it will be found useful both as a test and as training.

Conversation has been alternately praised and condemned. Some regard it as enlivening, stimulating, and instructive — the most enjoyable and profitable of all exercises. To others it is futile, inane, productive of no valuable results, and terribly wasteful of time. It seems clear that not all teachers and not all classes can use conversation to good advantage in high school work. The teacher must be inspiring and perfectly at home in the language; the class must be alert, responsive, and homogeneous; the work must be systematically planned and followed out swiftly and directly to a definite end. Otherwise the time can be spent better in other ways. With large

classes the necessary conditions rarely obtain, and unfortunately most high school classes are too large for the best work. Although conversation as a formal class exercise is apt to be a failure, there is no class in which a competent teacher will not find many opportunities to converse easily in the foreign language, now giving a simple explanation, now asking a question and getting an easy answer, all so naturally that no one seems aware that the foreign language is used. The more of this the better. Conversation of this kind is the straight road to effective possession of a language; neither strained nor forced, it is good work.

Translation, too, has its warm friends and its bitter enemies. Reformers have worked as hard to drive it out of the class as they have done to drag conversation in; but theme and version are still neither dead nor moribund, and there is no prospect that an exercise which has maintained itself since the beginning of language study is going to vanish in the next generation or two. The difficulty is that the meat in the sandwich has a tendency to drop out and leave only the bare bread — *voces et inter eas nihil* — in other words, that translation comes to be a mechanical substitution of the words of one language for the words of another, with little or no thought in the process, while translation ought to mean the study of a passage until its thought is clearly apprehended, and then an effort to put that exact thought into the other language with all the force and beauty that our command of the second language makes possible. This, of course, is translation of the ideal sort, but it is the kind of translation at which all translation should aim, and the only kind which will contribute effectively to a command of the foreign language and an appreciation of its qualities. With the other more common kind of translation, the pupil never reads French and German, but only the shabby English into which he has more or less correctly paraphrased the original; he never writes real French or German, but only English with a foreign

vocabulary. Such translation is rightly condemned as vicious and demoralizing, a veritable hindrance to the learner; but only the most vigorous and persistent efforts will keep the beginner from translating in just that way. Among helpful devices for preventing it, we suggest oral translation of sentences heard but not seen, the translation, with book closed, of a sentence that the pupil has just read, or other ways for avoiding the *mot à mot* and securing a grasp of the word group as a whole with a complete meaning.

"What do you mean?" "So and so." "Then say that!" will sometimes get a real translation instead of the monstrosity that has been first offered by the pupil.

Underlying all the discussion for and against translation is the inevitable fact that not one student in a thousand can expect to gain such control of a second language that he can frame his thought in it as quickly and effectively as in his own; hence, whenever a thing is to him real and important, he will think it through first in the vernacular, after which any expression of the thought in a second language cannot fail to be more or less consciously and directly a translation. The foreign correspondent must translate when he communicates the information received from abroad; he must translate when he writes in a foreign language the instructions received in English from his employer; the engineer, the lawyer, the physician, the scientist, the philosopher, the author must all translate when they proceed to use in their business the information gleaned from foreign sources. Even the teacher must translate when he tells his associates what our colleagues in France or Germany say of the direct methods. The practical thing, then, is to train the pupil to translate as he ought, and to depend for his expression in the new language, not on dictionary substitutes, but on the treasure of foreign words and expressions which he has acquired and learned to associate with their correct meaning. And the time to teach him this, which is no easy thing to learn, is while he is learning the

language, for practice in doing it must be long and careful if it is to be successful.

In the give and take of conversation the rapidity of the process often excludes translation, but there are comparatively few who will ever converse enjoyably in a foreign tongue, and the long practice which is an essential condition will usually bring with it the power.

To read and understand a foreign language without translation is much easier than to speak or write in it. Until, however, one can give in his own language a swift and accurate rendering of what he has read, there is good reason to doubt whether he has understood clearly and completely, or whether he has been satisfied with the vague sort of semicomprehension which, if unchallenged, sometimes passes for understanding when our pupils read the mother tongue. Inability to translate rapidly and well must imply either failure to understand clearly what has been read or else a poor command of English. If the latter, the American boy or girl needs nothing so much as just the kind of training in English which this translation affords; if the former, we need to try the pupil by the test which most swiftly and certainly reveals the weakness. Hence translation of the right sort, both from and into the foreign language, must not be omitted from high school courses.

On the other hand, the student must be trained to get thought directly from the original, and instruction in the foreign language is not intended primarily as instruction in English. So the wise teacher will give but a portion of his time to translation, and he will avoid too great use of spoken English by having a considerable part of the translation which he deems necessary written rather than oral.

The only safe use of a foreign language is that which imitates the expressions of scholarly natives. Hence all work of the learner must be based on good models, and the stages of imitation seem to be: Exact reproduction; paraphrasing, with

variations of persons, number, tense, etc., and substitution of other suitable words for those of the text; free reproduction or composition based on the text and closely following it; and free composition. The last is the highest and most difficult achievement, and it cannot wisely be attempted until the learner has had ample experience with the forms of expression which the native uses in similar composition. Some excellent teachers refuse to attempt it before the fourth year of the course. Premature attempts at free composition are as bad for style as premature chattering is bad for good pronunciation. Both result in fixing wrong notions and bad habits which are very hard to overcome. It is better policy to make haste slowly and to be sure that the proper foundation is laid before we try to build upon it.

How far may we reasonably expect to go in the second and third years of study? Much will depend on how successful we are in overcoming the aversion of parents and school boards to the elimination of the incompetent at the end of the first year, and this must be done on the ground that for those whom we seek to eliminate further study of the foreign language is less profitable than the same time spent studying something in which they can get better results. If modern language classes can thus be restricted to those who show a reasonable fondness and aptitude for the study, by the end of the third year the work accomplished should be about as set forth for the intermediate course in the Report of the Committee of Twelve. It is probable that most teachers will prefer to read in class a somewhat smaller number of pages than is there suggested. There is a strong belief that a small amount thoroughly prepared and carefully studied leaves a larger permanent possession than is retained from reading hastily several pages, and some would reduce the amount required to one-half that specified by the committee of twelve. Others fear that asking a smaller amount will mean more dawdling, less work, and the same poor quality with only half the quantity. The

solution seems to be a reasonable amount of honest work, at times so concentrated as to permanently impress essentials and at other times so distributed as to stimulate alertness, develop the power of swift vision and rapid judgment, and give opportunity for a fairly wide range of style and vocabulary. In either type of lesson the teacher must have a clear notion of just what he is working for, and he must devote himself to getting it. The Report of the Committee of Twelve appeared about 15 years ago, and the improvement in the equipment of teachers and in the methods commonly employed at present should make it possible to insist more strongly upon the oral side of the instruction. If this is effectively done, the greater thoroughness of the treatment in class should more than compensate for a reduced number of pages read.

For the fourth year we may add to our general aims such special work in scientific or commercial subjects as may be required by particular schools. As to the amount of work, it is probable that the advanced courses outlined in the Report of the Committee of Twelve are rather more than can be expected of even the best high schools in a four years' course.

In the fourth year the foreign language will be generally used in class, and good pupils should develop considerable facility of correct expression. Nevertheless, in French, for instance, we, with our maximum of four years' (20 hours') study, cannot hope for results equal to those attained by a German *oberrealschule* with nine years (47 hours) or of a *realgymnasium*, with seven years (29 hours) backed by nine years of Latin. To-day the work of our best schools is at least as good as the comparison of time allowances would lead us to expect; and if we compare the probable utility of a foreign language to the average American boy with its usefulness to his French or German cousin, his ratio of efficiency would doubtless be greater than his ratio of need. That, however, is no answer to the demand that an American pupil who wishes good instruction in a foreign language should be able to

have as complete a course and do as good work as the French or German pupil. The committee believes, however, that this increased efficiency cannot come through an increased time allowance in the present high school years; nor can more be expected than our best teachers are now doing with the time and material at their disposal. Improvement must be sought, first, from an increase in the number of well-equipped and efficient teachers, and second, from an extension of the years of modern language study downward to the age of 10, at which time the boy abroad has begun it.

V. TEACHERS AND TEXTS.

If the American public is about to insist on better work in the field of modern languages, it must recognize that the first essential is a body of well-prepared teachers, and that the training of such teachers is long and expensive, including foreign residence of at least a year in addition to the usual equipment of an American teacher. Unless the schools will pay a teacher of French or German enough more than they pay a teacher of English or science or history or mathematics to cover this initial expense, the colleges must so plan the modern language work for those who intend to teach that the youth on graduating may be as competent to teach French or German as he is to teach the other subjects. Perhaps he is so already; but while neither he nor his pupils are likely to be tested by the man in the street as to his knowledge of Latin or physics or algebra, in this cosmopolitan age he cannot turn a corner, enter a hotel or a street car without facing some well-informed and pitiless critic who knows at once that his speech is not that of Paris or Berlin. The critic may, indeed, be a cook or a fiddler, but he hears with scorn our poor instructor's attempts to speak French or German and is not reluctant to express his derision. Nor will it do to hire the cook or the fiddler to teach for us, for they have already shown too often that they cannot meet the other requirements of our high

schools. We must have a large number of American-born teachers who know the foreign language too well to be ridiculous when they attempt to speak it. As school boards are likely to insist that a teacher is merely a teacher, worth so many dollars a year, without reference to what he teaches or what it cost to learn it, the colleges seem bound to face the problem of meeting the demand for young people better fitted to teach French, German, or Spanish. But just how they are to do this is a problem for the colleges and not for this committee.

Section V of the Report of the Committee of Twelve deals with the study of modern languages in the grades below the high school. We are in complete accord with the conclusions of that report that the study of a foreign language in the grades should be optional, restricted to those who will probably continue it, and allowed only in small classes, with a daily lesson, and with a competent teacher. But here we meet the obstacles of precedent, which says that it has not been done that way hitherto; of routine, which pleads that such special arrangements would involve great trouble and inconvenience to the schools; and of expense, which asserts that such teachers are hard to find, prefer high school service, and could not be kept without a salary larger than that paid to most other teachers in the same school. Possibly we might add to these, administrative inability to understand the situation and grapple with it successfully; for it is the task of an expert, and few school boards or school superintendents are modern language experts.

Here, too, we find ourselves in the vicious circle of insufficient teachers, due to insufficient college training, due to insufficient material, due to insufficient teachers, and so on round again. The only way to break into such a circle is to break into it wherever we strike it; to demand that the cities at once get some good modern language work done in the grades, and pay a reasonable price for it; that the colleges at once

give especial attention to training more competent teachers of modern languages; and that ill-equipped teachers get to work in summer schools or take a Sabbatical year abroad, the cities sharing this burden by granting them half pay on reasonable conditions.

If many important points of modern language work are not considered in this statement, it is because the Report of the Committee of Twelve, made 15 years ago, was so scholarly and so comprehensive that it would be a work of supererogation to repeat, and evidence of presumption to attempt to improve most that was said in that report. It is sufficient to call attention to certain lines along which further constructive suggestions seemed likely to be useful.

It has been stated that conditions have so changed in the past 15 years that a list of desirable texts ought to be published now, but the experience of the German teachers some years ago in publishing a "kanon" of French and English school texts showed the efficient performance of so great a work to be far beyond the resources of this committee; and with the many sources of information now available, it seemed best to mention no specific texts. We venture only to suggest that in choosing a text for any particular class, one should consider:

The date of the text. For school work modern texts are almost always preferable.

Its length. Long texts grow monotonous and give too little variety of style and vocabulary.

Its national quality. It should be a distinctive product of the race it depicts.

Its adaptation to the age, sex, and thought of the pupil.

Its informational content. Without being dull, it should give something worth remembering.

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ON THE USE OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE CLASS-ROOM.[1]

BY PROFESSOR H. C. G. VON JAGEMANN, HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

QUESTIONS connected with methods of teaching are largely economic questions. Pedagogical theory may devise what seems to be a thoroughly scientific method of teaching a foreign language; the teacher, however, is less concerned with what, on general principles, ought to be done, than he is with what he can do thoroughly well, with a given number of pupils, of a given capacity, in a given time. The ideal method of teaching is rarely practicable in the class-room, owing to the great limitations of teaching-force and time; and he who would be a successful teacher must recognize these limitations, must adapt his ideal method to the real conditions, and must refrain from trying to do the things which, from the nature of these conditions, cannot be done satisfactorily.

The various reforms in the teaching of modern languages that have been advocated time and again since Comenius, are only in part applicable to the conditions ordinarily found in schools and colleges. It seems, e.g., hardly necessary to point out that for grown persons the "Natural Method" of learning a language, i.e., the method by which children learn their mother tongue, would be as unnatural as it would be for children to learn their mother tongue from Webster's Dictionary; while, on the other hand, it is not at all certain that even little children might not learn their mother tongue more rapidly if they received

[1] A part of the material contained in this paper was printed in the Transactions of the Modern Language Association of America, vol. i. pp. 220 ff.

in it judicious and systematic instruction, adapted to their age, instead of being left to "pick it up," with a great waste of energy upon material of which they cannot yet make use. But even in the improved, and hence to that extent no longer "natural," form which this method has gradually taken in the hands of some very skilful teachers, its most distinctive features render it still unfit for use in ordinary college classes. These distinctive features are: (1) all instruction is in the first place oral; and (2) the only medium of communication permitted between teacher and pupil is the language to be taught.

To make instruction oral to the extent which the Natural Method requires is out of the question, because in college classes progress depends very largely upon the amount of home-study which the student can give to the subject, and home-study is made very difficult when the instruction in class is largely oral. To be sure, there are beginners' books in the foreign idiom, but no one has as yet succeeded in writing a systematic text-book in a foreign language which a student can use without frequently resorting to a dictionary or vocabulary when the teacher is not at hand; and that way of finding out the meaning of a word is excluded by the strict advocates of the Natural Method. How then is the student to be employed in the two hours of home-study for each recitation, the minimum ordinarily expected? As long as dictionaries and vocabularies are excluded, the Natural Method is possible only in schools where recitations are frequent, and where no work is expected of the pupil outside of the class-room, excepting, perhaps, memorizing matter with which he has been made thoroughly familiar in the class-room. Again, purely oral work itself is very difficult, if not impossible, with classes as large as are usually found in colleges. The various "Schools of Languages" that have produced good results with certain special varieties of the Natural Method, insist upon very small classes, and do not generally burden

the teacher with more than six pupils at a time. With classes as small as that, oral instruction might be made more successful in colleges and schools.

The second rule of the Natural Method, that the language to be taught should be the only medium of communication between teacher and pupil, deprives the student of one of the most useful instruments for learning a foreign language, viz., his mother tongue. Because a child, in trying to understand a new word or a strange idiom, does not draw for aid upon a foreign language which it does not understand at all, this is not a good reason why a grown person in full possession of one language should not make use of it for the purpose of correctly classifying the material of any other language that he may wish to acquire. It would seem distinctly unnatural if he did not make use of it. In fact, it would be quite impossible. His ultimate aim, to be sure, should be to understand and use the foreign language without the intervention of his own, i.e., without translating; but at first, and temporarily, voluntarily or involuntarily, he will associate the new word with the old, and not directly with the thing, until, by continued practice, he learns, so to speak, to skip one of the two mental processes, and learns to connect the new word directly with the thing, and *vice versâ*. The words of our mother tongue are so firmly associated in our minds with the things which they signify, that it requires a distinct and prolonged mental effort to displace them so much as to make room for a new word. That this is natural and in accordance with the laws of the human mind appears from the fact that even within the territory of our native language it is difficult for us to learn a new word without associating it at first with one with which we have previously been acquainted; and even in learning the name of a new thing, or of one for which we have not known any special name, we are very much inclined not to be satisfied with the new term, but we involuntarily seek at least for a definition made up of words of our old

stock. It is doubtless well to make, from the very beginning, systematic efforts to induce the student to connect the new words with the things themselves, and not with the words of his native language. But, on the other hand, there is no economy of time or strength in persistently rejecting the help which the student's native language offers, when we wish to make clear to him the meaning of a new word or idiom, especially as we cannot prevent the familiar native word from coming up in the pupil's mind, as soon as he has caught the drift of an often long and laborious, though perhaps successful, definition in the foreign idiom.

While, therefore, we do not believe that the language to be taught should form the only medium of communication between teacher and pupil, we are yet convinced that instruction in modern languages in colleges and schools is rendered more effective by making in the class-room as much use of the foreign idiom as the varying conditions of time, teaching-force, and general and special advancement of the pupils will allow. In order not to be misunderstood, however, we must state at once that we do not regard the ability to speak the foreign language as the chief object of its study in school or college. The difference between two persons, both knowing German thoroughly well, but one of them speaking the language, while the other does not, is simply this: the former has pronounced so often the most common words of the language in their various combinations with other words, that the mental process of associating certain ideas with the German words, and the subsequent reaction upon the speech-organs, has with him become habitual and rapid, while with the latter person it is unwonted and slow. Hence, the acquisition of a speaking knowledge of a foreign language does not, in itself, imply any increase in real knowledge or reasoning-power; and it has, therefore, no more claim to a place among serious college studies than any other of the numerous practical applications of scientific or artistic principles. The ground on which we

wish to justify the use of the foreign language in the class-room is not that it gives the student a speaking knowledge of it, but that it leads to a more thorough general acquaintance with the language, and a more intelligent appreciation of its literature.

As we have stated above, the extent to which the foreign idiom should be used in the class-room will depend on the varying conditions of time, teaching-force, and general and special advancement of the pupil. Any use of the foreign idiom as a means of communication between teacher and pupil requires intense mental application on both sides; for this reason, in elementary or second-year's classes, it can hardly be recommended, unless the classes are smaller than they are in most colleges. It is hoped that the time will come when teachers of German will not be burdened with larger elementary classes than their colleagues in Greek now are; then there will be no longer any objection to the use of German in the class-room on the ground of the size of the classes. Experience shows that in beginners' classes not exceeding twenty-five, the German language may to advantage be used from the very start, even in teaching the elements of grammar. The method which we recommend is, briefly, the following: —

Teach the student, by any method you may choose, the use of about fifty nouns, twenty-five adjectives, the numerals, a few particles, and a few forms of the auxiliaries. A week will amply suffice for this. The student will then be able to understand a simple grammatical principle if stated in German: —

Die deutsche Sprache hat zwei Declinationen.
Die erste Declination hat drei Klassen.
Die erste Klasse hat in der Mehrzahl keine Endung, etc.

These are sentences which the German student of a week or two will understand as readily as though they were written or spoken in English. The statement and explanation, in

German, of grammatical principles is much easier than is commonly supposed. It requires at first a little effort on the part of the teacher, to couch his explanations in such plain language as his students can understand. But this art may soon be acquired. A calculation shows that the elements of German can be taught according to any of the grammars commonly used, with the use of about eighty-five grammatical terms, mostly, of course, of Latin extraction. If the German language is to be used as a means of communication between teacher and pupil, sixty-four of these terms, or about seventy-five per cent, may be used in so slightly modified a form, that the student will easily understand them the first time they are used, and this without unduly resorting to Latinisms, using merely the same terminology that is used in Germany in all schools of a higher grade. In the case of twenty-three words, or twenty-seven per cent, is the corresponding German word of German origin preferable; in only a few cases, like "Ablaut" and "Umlaut," is it necessary to employ a purely German word. Some teachers will find it more advantageous to use as much as practicable a purely German terminology, and there is no doubt a certain gain in teaching such terms as "Hauptwort" and "Bindewort;" but even in that case the student will have to learn only forty-eight words which he does not know, in slightly modified form, from English or Latin Grammar, and most of them, like those cited above, are of very transparent signification. Aside from these technical terms, only the most common words which every student should know, will be needed to make up an elementary German grammar in German. As the time arrives for the student to grapple with the more intricate laws of the language, he will be able to understand the more difficult phraseology needed to express them. And, we may add, if a teacher succeeds in couching a new grammatical principle in such language as his pupils with close attention can understand, it will make a greater impression upon them than an ordinary explanation in English.

Little stress should at first be laid on translation from English into German. The method long used in Larousse's grammars and lexicologies for the public schools of France is far preferable; and, besides, the place of translation into German may be largely taken by the answers to grammatical and lexicological questions which the pupil must give in German. Nor should translation in class from German into English receive as much time as it ordinarily does. Interpretation in German should be largely substituted. The chief use of translating in class what the student has read at home, is to assure the teacher that the student has understood the true meaning of the text. If he can assure himself of this by way of asking questions on the text in German, additional training for the pupil is secured. How do teachers teach German in German schools or English in English schools? If the class read such matter as at their stage of advancement they should read, — and we are always inclined to give our students too difficult things to read, — the greater part of the text should be readily understood by the student. There will be difficult passages, and there should be; but in the great majority of cases the difficulty of a passage hinges upon the meaning or syntactical relation of one or two words, and, with a sufficient German grammatical vocabulary at his disposal, the teacher can generally explain such meaning or relation without leaving the territory of the German language. If this be done as a rule, an occasional resorting to translation, if it be deemed best, will do no harm.

This is, in outline, the method we should recommend. Let us now turn to a consideration of the advantages it offers. Everybody will agree that the ideal method of studying German is to go to Germany, mingle with the people, read newspapers, go to the theatre, and, last, but not least, place one's self under an experienced teacher who has a thorough knowledge of English and understands the student's difficulties and can answer his questions. Under such conditions rapid prog-

ress and good results are inevitable. Now, what are the essential features of these conditions, and to what extent may they be reproduced in the class-room? Is there anything peculiar about the atmosphere of Germany that makes it easier to learn German there than here? Doubtless, to understand a nation's literature, it is very desirable to see the country, observe the habits, and study the character of the people, and see as much as possible of their life in all its phases; but in order merely to learn the language, such direct contact with country and people is of much less importance. The reason why we make such rapid progress in a foreign language as soon as we arrive in the country where it is spoken, is not so much that we now study the language in its own home, but rather that we have so many more opportunities to hear and speak it. The difference between the training which we get in the class-room by the ordinary methods and that which we get in the foreign country is not necessarily one of kind, but one of quantity. It is one of kind in so far as in the foreign country we often have occasion to associate a new word or idiom with some personal observation or experience, which impresses it upon our minds; but this naturally holds good only of a limited part of the language-material, and, to a small extent, this advantage may be secured even in ordinary class-instruction. The most essential difference is, as we have said, one of quantity, and this difference in quantity is enormous. No method of teaching can make up for the advantages which a stay in the foreign country offers; but we contend that a more extensive use of the foreign language in the class-room can greatly reduce the disadvantages under which class-instruction at home ordinarily labors.

In the majority of institutions with which we are acquainted, by far the greater part of the time devoted to German is given to translation from German into English, and translation from English into German. Neither exercise allows the student to think in German for more than a few moments consecutively,

even if he tried, not to speak of its affording him absolutely no incentive to do so. Aside from the reading of the German text, and even that is not always done, the student hears and speaks nothing but English; in other words, for about ten minutes out of possible fifty, he learns German, the remaining forty minutes he learns facts about German. On the other hand, if, as above suggested, the instruction be carried on entirely in German, the student will learn German for fifty minutes. In addition to the study of the grammatical subject under discussion, or of the text before him, he has all the grammatical, lexicological, and literary comments in German. We all know the value of a vast amount of easy reading for the acquisition of a language. It seems a low estimate if we consider the amount of German the student will hear in each recitation over and above the text itself, equal to ten ordinary pages of an easy text; this would be equal to from one thousand to two thousand pages a year, according to the number of recitations. It seems evident that this must considerably increase and strengthen the student's knowledge of the language. As stated above, the reason of the rapid progress we make in a foreign language as soon as we arrive in the country where it is spoken, is simply that we continually hear the same forms, the same words, the same combinations of words. If German is spoken in the class-room, every sentence — whether spoken or read — will be a drill in the noun and adjective declensions, in the conjugation, in the government of prepositions, and in the elementary rules for arrangement. We suppose, of course, that the teacher is thorough, and that no faulty answer is ever allowed to pass.

The difficulty about reading German at sight is not that the necessary vocabulary is so large, but that the student is commonly brought face to face at once with too many of the rarer words, and in his bewilderment he has no opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with the most common ones. And any uncertainty as to the meaning of these common words

which the student ought to know, and might know, will materially lessen his capacity for correctly guessing the meaning of a rarer word occurring in the same passage. An examination of ten pages of Goethe's prose chosen at random shows that the articles, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries, and the most common adverbs constitute no less than fifty-eight per cent of his vocabulary. If the student has these at his fingers' ends, together with a reasonable number of nouns and adjectives, and the strong and most important weak and irregular verbs, he will have an excellent hold on the vocabulary of the language; and certainly a method like the one described will keep these fundamental terms sounding in his ears until he is as familiar with them as with their English equivalents.

One of the most fatal mistakes that teachers of modern languages in colleges are liable to make is to hurry their classes too much. The time allotted to their work is short and their aims are high; no wonder, they often give their students too difficult work. It would be much better for the student never to attempt to read a German classic in the original, than to slur over the elements of German, and then spell out or guess at Goethe's or Lessing's thoughts, or take frequent tumbles from the noble flights of Schiller's language into the regions of the adjective declension. German classics are not proper reading-material for the first year. "It is not knowing German to be able to work one's way through a foot-note and just miss the point from not knowing the force of a modal auxiliary." The use of German in the class-room will be found a wholesome corrective of this evil. The teacher, being obliged to make himself understood by his students, will not present to them material for which they are as yet unprepared.

Again, in this way, and only in this way, does the student become acquainted with the spoken language. This is a matter of no mean importance, and is well worth careful considera-

tion; but only a few points can be mentioned here. The literary language is to a certain extent a dead language; the spoken language, on the other hand, exhibits life, action, linguistic tendencies. We believe in teaching in college the principles of linguistic development, and these principles are better illustrated by the spoken language than by the language of literature. Moreover, a knowledge of the every-day speech of a people is necessary for the intelligent appreciation of its literature. The character of literary productions, of authors, of schools of poetry, of entire periods of literature, is often defined by their relation to the every-day speech of the people. How, then, can we make students appreciate the character of the works they are reading unless we give them the standard of the every-day speech to measure by? Can any one appreciate the simple grandeur of the language of the English Bible, or the loftiness of that of Milton, who does not know how English-speaking people commonly express themselves? No one particular work, however perfect it may be, can adequately reflect the character of a language or a literature; on the contrary, there is nothing more characteristic of a language than the diversity of uses to which it can be put. The every-day speech of the people seems to be the best starting-point for the study of the various languages within a language, and the most natural standard of comparison.

As we have already said, it would be impossible to use German exclusively in very large first or second year classes. But even in classes of forty or fifty a slight beginning may be made. The least that may be expected from the very beginning is that no sentence shall ever be translated until the German has been read aloud. This reading of the text, so far from delaying rapid progress, as some teachers think, results ultimately in a great gain of time. It is the only way students can ever be taught to comprehend the construction and meaning of a sentence at the first glance, without translation into English. A compli-

cated construction often becomes clear as soon as the teacher reads the sentence aloud with some expression. A great amount of time is wasted in translating matter that really offers no serious difficulties and might be readily understood on the first careful reading of the text. Systematic efforts in this direction from the very first, coupled with a careful selection of sufficiently easy reading-material, will generally enable the teacher to dispense with translation to some extent, even in classes too large to make any extensive use of German for grammatical and lexicological explanations possible. Moreover, the reading aloud of German is necessary to make the student familiar with the sound and rhythm of the language, a familiarity that he must possess, if he would ever understand lyric and dramatic poetry. All this would seem to go without saying; yet the writer knows of institutions where, a few years ago, it was the custom to translate Heine's poems into English, while the German text was never read. Surely, students that cannot understand Heine's lyrics after the simple reading of the text, and a few explanations, — either in German or in English, as the teacher may deem best, — are not yet ready to read Heine.

Under ordinarily favorable circumstances the student should, by the beginning of the third year, have become so familiar with the sound of the language and the ordinary vocabulary, that he may begin to read the easier classics without translating more than occasional passages of exceptional difficulty. The time in class may then be devoted to interpretation in German, and to the discussion of the poet's life and works, likewise in German. We do not advocate that the pupils should always speak German; under ordinary circumstances they cannot have had practice enough to do this without serious loss of time. But the teacher should, as a rule, speak German. Experience at Harvard and elsewhere shows that where systematic efforts in this direction are made, the results have been good. Toward the end of the

year there will be very few things connected with an outline-study of the classic writers of the eighteenth century that the teacher cannot present to his students in German. The advantages are apparent. The greater part of the time that is commonly devoted to translation becomes available either for additional reading, or for the discussion of things for which there is usually no time, while the constant use of the language in the class-room may very largely take the place of special exercises in grammar and composition. Occasional examinations, conducted at least partially in English, amply suffice to control the progress of every member of the class and enable the teacher to adapt his method of treating the subject to the capacity and needs of his students.

Much has been said and written about the disciplinary value of the study of modern languages, and about the necessity of using certain methods of instruction to insure these disciplinary advantages. It seems to us that here there is danger of mistaking the means for the end. To regard a certain method of acquiring the new language rather than its possession as insuring literary culture and scholarship, seems to us a fundamental mistake, and one that cannot help exercising a harmful influence on this important branch of instruction. To our mind, the man that knows three languages thoroughly is an educated man to the extent to which the study of three languages can make him such, whatever method he may have pursued in their acquisition. Surely there is no special virtue in learning paradigms or rules of syntax, except as they help us to understand and use the language, or as a means of cultivating the memory; and for this latter purpose, selections from the best prose and poetry would seem to have the advantage in point of greater intrinsic value. On the other hand, surely no one will deny that an accurate knowledge of several languages, such as enables its possessor to read Goethe and Victor Hugo intelligently, and to distinguish between the styles of different authors and the lan-

guage of different periods, is evidence of high culture. It should not be supposed that such a knowledge can ever be acquired without the benefit of considerable mental discipline. Under very favorable circumstances, as when a person has acquired the elements of the foreign language when very young, and has had constant opportunity to hear and speak it, the process may have been a slow one and the discipline may not at any time have been very severe, but the aggregate effect must be the same; just as a person that has always lived an active out-door life is apt to have a sound and well-trained body, without having ever gone through a regular course of "developing exercises." The question which the world puts to the student is not whether the method by which he learned German was productive of mental discipline, but whether he knows German. Nor is this way of putting the question confined to those intensely practical people that have no sympathy with the higher objects of liberal studies. A person that should claim to be permeated with the spirit of Greek culture, but could not read Homer or tell who Pericles was, would be ridiculed everywhere, and justly so. All discussions about lending any special disciplinary value to the study of modern languages by the use of certain methods of instruction seem to us sheer waste of time. Let us teach the student German and French, and not trouble ourselves about mental discipline; that will come of itself. If we give the student a sound, well-rounded knowledge of these languages, his faculties will of necessity be improved, and he will be better equipped for any profession he may afterward enter. The only question for us to consider is how to use the very limited time to the best advantage, so that we may take the student to the farthest possible point on the road toward a mastery of the tongue we profess to teach.

A word, however, should be added about the special claim so commonly made that the greatest disciplinary advantages of language-study are after all to be obtained from the exercise of translating from one language into another, and especially

from a foreign language into the student's vernacular. It has been said that every study, whether of Greek, mathematics, history, biology, or German should also be an exercise in English. We are prepared to grant this, but only in one sense. As far as the English language is used in the class-room, or in any exercise connected with the work in hand, it should be good and vigorous English. But the chief duty of the teacher of German is, after all, to teach German, not English. If he can incidentally contribute to the student's knowledge of English, it is clearly within his function to do so; but he will render English studies a greater service if he improves his instruction in German in such a manner that the student learns more in a given time and gains more time for special work in English. Nor can the exercise of translating from German into English be regarded as especially useful in the acquisition of a good English style. On the contrary, for the same reasons for which we have above recommended the discontinuance of translation into German wherever the conditions render a better method possible, we must also regard the exercise of translating from German or any other foreign language into English as harmful rather than useful as far as the acquisition of a good English style is concerned; harmful at least if carried to such an extent as is ordinarily the case. The fact that there are so few really good translations in any language is abundant proof that translating is an exceedingly difficult thing, far too difficult for the ordinary student — or teacher, for that matter — to attempt, except in very small amounts and with very great care. Frequent exercises in writing brief abstracts, in the student's own language, without the book before him, would seem to us much more useful in forming a good and vigorous English style, than a large amount of indifferent translating.

COMMON SENSE IN TEACHING MODERN LANGUAGES.

BY MR. E. H. BABBITT, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

If I were to follow the plan of the old-time sermon-makers, I should naturally speak on this subject under three heads: (1) Common Sense, (2) Teaching, and (3) Modern Languages. Under the first head, however, nobody can tell another person anything, and under the second it is not likely that I can tell you a great deal. Still, before I begin to talk on the subject about which I hope I can tell you something, I wish to touch upon the other two, in order to make clear my starting-point.

A few years ago I got from a man who seems to have been more popular then than now, a sort of formula which has been a very useful part of my mental furniture ever since, and expresses as well as anything my conception of what common sense means. I refer to the famous sentence, "It is a condition and not a theory which confronts us." In ninety-nine out of a hundred of the problems of actual life, it *is* a condition and not a theory which confronts us; and the man who has common sense is the man who is very sparing of theories till he is sure of all the conditions, and then applies to the conditions, from all the theories he has on the subject, those which rest on the most general and most nearly axiomatic principles.

Every act of human effort has for its object the accomplishment of some result by the application of certain means under certain conditions. A state of things as it exists before the act is to be changed into one more desirable. He is most suc-

cessful who has the clearest understanding of what the existing state of things is, and of the state of things to be produced by the change, and who has at his command all the means which could be used to produce the desired result, and understands their relations, and has common sense to apply them in the right way and at the right time.

Now, as we turn to teaching, I mean as the intellectual process of giving instruction, we can particularize our general formula somewhat as follows: Given the sum total of the pupil's knowledge already in store, his powers to perceive and to do, his tendencies and habits; required the possession by the pupil of some specific additional knowledge or power; how shall we place before the mind of the pupil, in the form most readily assimilated, the matter which he must add in order to acquire what he wants?

Good teaching is simply common sense applied to this problem. This means: Be sure you know what is in your pupil's mind, and just what more you wish him to know or be able to do, and then proceed step by step, in the most natural manner, along the lines of least resistance, to get his mind to work to acquire the desired facts or habits.

This problem, of course, varies enormously with the age and intellectual advancement of the pupil. In childhood we have to deal with a retentive memory and the ability to acquire by unconscious imitation, without much exercise of the reasoning faculty. From the eve of this period until maturity the reason develops more and more, and direct memory and the imitative faculty go over into memory by association and conscious attention to the processes of any art or ability to be acquired. We have thus two fairly distinct periods in which the general plan of instruction must be correspondingly distinct. It would be absurd to attempt to make the child apply reasoning powers which he possesses only in a very rudimentary form, at the expense of the acquisition of facts which is easy, natural, and attractive to him. On the

other hand, it is not only absurd, but highly dangerous for a sound mental training, to overlook the unfolding reasoning faculty, and go on cramming the mind with uncorrelated facts after it is capable of seeing the relations of things. The average human being is none too logical as it is; and after all it is worth more to be able to reason correctly from a few facts, than to know all the facts about a given matter without being able to interpret them. The point cannot be too strongly emphasized, that the main work of the educator who is concerned with the adolescent mind, the educator whose province is to give what is variously called a secondary, collegiate, or liberal education, is to bring out the reasoning faculty, to train the mind to think clearly and logically; no other power of the mind is of much use to a man without this.

This work of liberal education, or college work, which has the training of the mind for its central point, as distinct on the one hand from primary school work, which deals chiefly in facts, and on the other hand from professional or technical training, is, in this country, divided between the colleges and the schools of the high school or preparatory school grade, such as are represented by this Association. In speaking now about modern language teaching, I wish to confine my attention chiefly to the work in these schools, and its relation to the continuation of the subject in the college. There is a great deal of modern language teaching outside of these schools and colleges which is entirely legitimate and useful, but needs to be discussed here only in order to call your attention to some perfectly obvious distinctions which need to be kept in mind if we are to use common sense in modern language work. The conditions of work in modern language teaching vary more than perhaps those of any other subject; and there is a most exasperating ignorance of these conditions on the part of the non-pedagogical public, which extends to many patrons and trustees of our educational institutions, sometimes even to their managers, in such a way as to throw

discredit on modern language teaching, and make it very uphill work to reach the highest efficiency in it. The most prevalent and pernicious error is a confusion of the different purposes of modern language teaching. A modern language may be used as the medium of the highest and most wholesome mental discipline, or as the key to the broadest culture and some of the most interesting chapters of human thought. In this use it ranks with the other "humanities," — the classic languages, history, and similar subjects. A modern language may also be treated simply as a tool — something whose use enables one to obtain information more nearly at first hand, or to communicate with people who could not be reached without it. In this use it may be compared with practical arithmetic, book-keeping, or stenography. It may be studied with an even less serious purpose — as a mere accomplishment, like piano-playing or amateur painting. A modern language may be taught with either of these ends in view to pupils of any age, from the youngest child to the adult. Furthermore, there are various direct results and various means of reaching them which are of varying worth, according to the ultimate end to be attained, and according to the age and mental development of the pupil.

It is no wonder, then, that almost hopeless confusion on the subject exists in the lay mind, and perhaps small wonder that this confusion extends even among educators to quarters where it is, to say the least, unexpected.

There are four lines of attainment to be distinguished in the immediate objects of the study of a modern language, — four arts, so to speak, through which must come all the ultimate gains in the way of practical advantages or of mental training which are sought. These four arts or abilities are: To speak the language, to understand it when spoken, to read it, and to write it. A person can acquire any one of these arts without necessarily possessing the others; though the first two, which depend upon the education of the ear, and the last

two, which depend upon that of the eye, go more or less together, and contrast thus in pairs according to the sense perceptions involved. The idea of a person who speaks and understands a language without being able to read or write that language or any other is familiar enough; and there are very many persons who can read a language well enough for all practical purposes without being able to understand the simplest sentence spoken in it, or to speak or even write it with any correctness.

There are probably very many more people who study a modern language for the ability to speak it than for any other purpose. Of these, again, the great majority have no very serious purpose, but take French or German lessons as they do piano lessons, to acquire what they consider a pleasing accomplishment. Others have a practical end in view; they are going abroad, or they may come into business relations with people who speak the language they are studying. Now, speaking a language is an empirical art, quite comparable to playing a musical instrument or to writing shorthand. The acquisition of the art implies principally the training of certain sets of muscles to obey certain impulses from the brain. To have the muscles trained to pronounce and use the words of more than one language is quite parallel to being able to play the same tune on more than one instrument, or to write a sentence both in shorthand and in common script. I regard all these little knacks as perfectly healthy and legitimate occupations for the mind, and desirable in so far as they give their possessor an additional source of pleasure or profit; and if any of my children want to speak French or German, or write shorthand, or play the banjo, I shall certainly encourage them, so far as the accomplishment in question does not interfere with more serious pursuits; and, if I possess any of the accomplishments myself, I will cheerfully teach them and practise with them whenever I have time.

Now, this practical accomplishment of speaking a language

can, like all such practical accomplishments, best be acquired by a great amount of practice in imitation of good models. An ideal teacher to impart this accomplishment is accordingly a person whose own speech is beyond question as a model, who has patience and some tact in giving individual instruction, and whose time is not too valuable to be employed a great many hours to accomplish the required result. These qualities are generally found together in our country in persons whose native tongue is the one to be taught; and so we find a large number of persons, almost without exception of foreign birth, engaged in this work. The work is as legitimate and useful as that of a teacher of music or stenography; and among those engaged in it are very many worthy and respectable persons, who have that high opinion of the importance of their work which every one must have in order to succeed. There are even many who for one reason or another have better education and ability than is necessary for the successful teaching of such an art, but are obliged to turn to this work and do it for the small compensation which is sufficient to pay the rather low-priced talent which is quite adequate for the work, and thus determines the standard of compensation. There is no good English word to distinguish this class of persons. The Germans have the word *Sprachmeister*, which expresses pretty well the idea of something parallel to a music-, drawing-, or dancing-master, and has been used to some extent to express the idea in English. Like the others referred to, the *Sprachmeister* lives by the practice of an art, and is not, in virtue of his calling, an educator by profession in the sense that we are. Still, as I said just now, many of them are really very intelligent persons, and have developed their work on sound pedagogical principles.

These lead logically, in the great majority of cases which fall within the province of the *Sprachmeister*, to what is best known as the "natural method," about which I shall speak later. Various shades of this method, which I take for

granted is familiar to most of you, have been used with great success by men who are thoroughly competent in their line, and cannot in any way be called quacks. But their success has opened a profitable field to very many who cannot be called anything else, who find profit in taking advantage of the very loose ideas which prevail concerning the real usefulness and the real difficulty of speaking a foreign language, to get pupils and sell text-books on the strength of some particular "method" which promises to do what every experienced teacher knows is impossible. And even the best of the *Sprachmeister* are prone, like all artists, to claim for their art an exaggerated importance, and exalt the speaking knowledge of a language to a position in the work of education which in no way belongs to it. The conservative educators generally pay little attention to all the noise made by the various schools of *Sprachmeister*, but occasionally one of them finds it worth while to bring forward something in refutation of their extravagance. One of the best things of the kind is an article by Professor Calvin Thomas, which is largely devoted to the point which I wish to bring forward next.[1]

Professor Thomas implies that a reading knowledge of a language is the key to higher things than a speaking knowledge, but does not think it worth while, apparently, to argue the point, which he assumes as self-evident. I doubt if it is self-evident to the lay mind, and I have even got some new light on the matter recently myself from an investigation regarding the vocabulary possessed by various individuals. It has become a sort of tradition that a child or illiterate person has only a few hundred words — some have it as low as two hundred or three hundred. I tried to get at the vocabulary of adults, and make experiments, chiefly with my students, to see how many English words each knew. We know that the Bible contains about eight thousand words, and that Shakespeare used not more than eighteen thousand. The "International

[1] See page 11.

Dictionary" contains about one hundred and twenty thousand. My plan was to take a considerable number of pages from the dictionary at random, count the number of words on those pages which the subject of the experiment could define without any context, and work out a proportion to get an approximation of the entire number of words in the dictionary known. The results were surprising for two reasons. In the size of the vocabulary of such students, the outside variations were less than twenty per cent, and their vocabulary was much larger than I had expected to find. The majority reported a little below sixty thousand words. Now, it may be that some educated men in modern days use as many words as Shakespeare in expressing their thoughts, but probably very few use anything like as many. The fact brought out by my experiments means, then, that every educated person carries a reading vocabulary of several times the number of words he uses in speaking. The same thing is undoubtedly true of people of an education inferior to that of college students — the ordinary middle-class people, whose range of reading, as well as of conversation, does not extend so far, but who, nevertheless, do read about many subjects which they do not often talk about.

The complexity of modern life requires that every one who reads at all shall be able to read of things which do not concern his own daily life. But no one speaks very fluently about things which do not come into his daily life. (We teachers, whose own daily activity requires us to have a ready command of language for many subjects, often fail to realize this till we are brought face to face with an after-dinner speech or an oral examination.)

Now, in these days of the printing-press, practically every one enters all the higher fields of thought, at least for any purpose of serious study, through reading; and his ability to talk on such a subject comes after he has become familiar with it in print. (How many of us in writing for public

delivery have had to consult the dictionary for the pronunciation of some word which we know in print, which expresses an idea that we need to use, but which we have never heard spoken!)

Modern education is acquired very largely, and I think in an increasing degree, through the eye; and the training of the eye is entitled to the first consideration. You know that modern psychology shows that some individuals do their thinking largely or entirely in terms of one set of sense-impressions, and some in those of another. This is a fact of the greatest importance in the work of education, and has not had sufficient consideration in the teaching of modern languages, where it obviously has very far-reaching effects. For if a pronounced "visualizer" — a person who records and reproduces all thoughts as sight-impressions — tries to work with methods that are better adapted to a person who records by sound-impressions, or *vice versa*, there may be a great waste of energy. Take a very common case. A "visualizer" who has had the usual amount of practice in silent reading can get through a printed page very much faster than the words can be spoken, while a person who depends upon sound-impressions cannot.

I have found a few persons who can finish a book of two hundred ordinary pages in an hour, and give a satisfactory account of its contents. If such a person be compelled to learn languages through the ear, there is a loss of this natural advantage, which might just as well be used. Now, our psychologists have found that the great majority of Americans are "visualizers."[1] And I incline to believe that the visual habit is that which gives the most satisfactory means of communication with the external world, and the readiest and best available forms of thought, that therefore the increase of

[1] Germans seem to have a much larger proportion among them of those who remember by sound-impressions; a significant fact in view of the persistence of the German *Sprachmeister*.

"vituality" to which I referred above is in no way undesirable, and that methods of instruction which take it into account are better adapted to American schools than those which do not.

Now, if a man finds the speaking knowledge of his own language, which he has acquired in his own daily living and thinking, insufficient for all the demands of a liberal education, it is of course impossible to make the necessarily inferior knowledge of a foreign language which can be acquired in a country where it is not the current language, come anywhere near meeting those demands. I am sure that no one who looks without prejudice upon the results of various methods of instruction in modern languages can fail to observe how the apparently brilliant results of the natural method, or of any method which makes prominent the ability to speak, prove barren for all the uses of a really liberal education. I would apologize for dwelling so long on this point if I did not feel that all the unsatisfactory things in the modern language teaching in our schools and colleges grew in one way or another out of it, and also if I did not know from unmistakable evidence that this fundamental misconception exists more generally and in higher educational circles than most of us would at first believe.

Granted, then, that the ability to speak a foreign language cannot be imparted by school instruction, and is not worth while if it could be, and that the ability to read should be the chief end of our instruction, how shall we teach our pupils to read? Common sense would seem to answer: Let them *read*, as fast and as much as they have time to do intelligently, and don't bother them with any side issues. I believe that for the great majority of American boys in our schools as they are this is literally the true answer. But it makes all the difference in the world at what age your pupils begin the study. If you have young children whose imitative faculty is strong, who are rapidly adding to their vocabulary in their

own language as they make the acquaintances of new ideas, and are ready to take any word given them, or any two or three words, for an idea when they first meet it, who cannot read so well as they can speak, and never heard of grammar, then the common-sense way to teach them is to use at first the "natural method," pure and simple, and go over from that to more "bookish" ways as the mind develops into something which can work better with books. The vocabulary thus acquired is useful in further study so far as it goes, and any facility in speaking or understanding does no harm, and may do some good. But this kind of thing has no great educational value unless it is followed by a course which deals with ideas as well as words. Take an extreme case of success with this method — a child of ten or twelve years, of German parents, who has had good instruction and heard as much German as English, and really uses one language as well as the other. No child of that age has the stock of ideas, in whatever language he expresses them, to understand the meaning of the facts of literature or history without further study; and the fact that he can express in two languages what ideas he has does not help in this matter at all. Moreover, this is a field for private instruction or special schools, and does not concern the usual American school at all. In most cases our pupils do not begin modern languages till they are past the age mentioned.

Very many do not begin until they are in college or in the last year or two of their preparatory course. The question of how such students shall learn to read modern languages is a different one from that last mentioned, and it is practically the only one which our instruction has to take into account. Here we must again make several distinctions. One is made by the ultimate purpose of the study. Some students need to read German solely for the purpose of knowing how the Germans express ideas which are already in the student's mind, or are to come in, for the sake of the idea. Such are espe-

cially scientific students or advanced students in various fields who need to use German text-books. Others wish to make the acquaintance of German life and thought for the culture which it gives them, and so are more on the lookout for specifically German ideas, and consider it more important to get in touch with the national "atmosphere" and character. The former class generally greatly outnumbers the latter in our schools, and, since the proximate object of the instruction is much the same in both cases, has the greater consideration in shaping the exact plan of instruction. The time which can be given to the study is generally no more than enough to attain a satisfactory reading knowledge; and even if it is, such knowledge is the first thing to be acquired.

What does a satisfactory reading knowledge mean? It does not mean the ability to recite German paradigms never so correctly and glibly, or to render a German sentence, after a long session with the dictionary, into a more or less correct English equivalent; and it certainly does not mean the ability to recite German poems from memory, or to recognize at sight or by sound all the sentences in Ollendorf. To my mind it means that to a person having such knowledge, the idea embodied in a German sentence seen for the first time shall reach the mind at once as directly and unceremoniously, so to speak, as possible. It is not necessary that the idea shall go through the medium of the English language to reach the understanding, nor is it necessary for the usual "visualizing" American mind that it shall go through the medium of the sound-symbols for the same idea.

Let us dwell a moment on this point. The sight-symbols on the printed page of German are one expression for an idea. The sound-symbols heard when the printed sentence is read aloud are another. The English words, spoken or written, for the same idea are another. Finally, if the idea is an at all familiar one, there is in most minds a sort of shorthand expression for it — some association of form, or color, or sound,

or tactile sensation which stands for the idea and spares the trouble of putting it into words. That is why people can read faster than the words can be spoken, or listen to a speaker and keep up an independent train of thought without losing what he says. It is this, the ultimate symbol for the idea, which we wish the printed sentence to suggest immediately.

The sound-symbol for the idea is, of course, what every individual begins with in learning his own language. When he learns to read he substitutes sight-symbols, which, in the case of people who read a great deal, become not merely a substitute for the sound-symbols, but another equally direct *and much more rapid* means of conveying ideas to the brain, through a different sense-organ. And this, as we have seen above, gives access to a much more comprehensive range of thought than the spoken language, which limits a person for thought material to the ideas of the people he meets.

When we wish to acquire this same ability in a foreign language, we must simply give ourselves the same amount of practice. The fact of being able to use one language in this way is, however, an immense advantage in learning another. The chief task is to get the vocabulary of the new language, taking vocabulary in the broad sense to include both words and idioms as expressions of ideas. If we already have a familiar way of expressing the idea, we can use that to bridge the way to the new way. That is what we do when we go from the sound-symbol to the sight-symbol in first learning to read; and we must either make the same transition in learning to read the new language, or go from the expression of the idea in our own language — in other words, translate. Which of these shall be done depends on the conditions of the problem, — the purpose of the study, the age of the pupil, the opportunities for practice, and finally, and perhaps chiefly, in the many cases where other things are equal, upon the personality of the teacher.

There is an outcry against translation, which is kindred with the din of the "natural method" people, and it is based upon a kindred misconception. Like the "natural method" people, those who raise this cry are right under certain conditions; but those conditions are not found where they believe them to be. Their assumption is, that the spoken language is *the* language, that the written language is only a set of symbols for the spoken language, and that this must be learned before the written language can be used. This was entirely true before the invention of printing, and probably for a long time after; it is true to-day of the great majority of the human race — of all who cannot read well, and probably of all persons who record thought by sound-impressions; but for just the people with whom we are concerned — the modern Americans who have reached the higher schools — the written or rather the printed language is not a set of symbols for the sounds of the spoken language, but for the ideas, just as directly as the sounds of the spoken language are. It should never be forgotten that such a student can acquire an ability to read a foreign language perfectly adequate for all his purposes without ever hearing a word of it spoken, and that in very many cases it makes no difference to him whether he ever has heard it or not. Such a student will almost inevitably set out from the expression of the idea in his own language; if he is compelled to go through the spoken foreign language to the written, it is simply a more roundabout way. Whether it is worth while to take such a way is always a case of a "condition and not a theory." The ability to understand the foreign language is often worth something; though I believe it is generally greatly overestimated, both as to its intrinsic importance and its bearing on the work of instruction. I find that it can be brought in at almost any stage along with translation, that it helps many students to fix their vocabulary, and is a pleasant variation in the class-room routine; but that if it is used so much as to encroach upon

translation in the earlier part of the course, many students who have not a quick ear are not reached at all, and all are liable to get into dilatory habits.

The reason is not hard to find. Hold a student responsible for a clear understanding of the ideas expressed by the German on the page, and he can work cheerfully with grammar and dictionary as many hours a day as he needs, and the result is only a question of his own talent and industry. But the understanding of the spoken language is something which, in ordinary cases, he can practise only in the class-room; you cannot test his progress except by indirect means, and he does not feel that he has anything definite to do when he is at work by himself. I should therefore give predominance to translation as a practical matter of economy in teaching. The other method calls for a disproportionate amount of work on the part of the teacher, unless he is really so deficient in English as to make translation the greater task to him; and, after all, it is what the pupils do, and not what the teacher does, that really counts in their progress. In general, however, the mental processes involved in the use of the sight-symbols and the sound-symbols for a language lie so near together that progress in one always carries with it something of the other; and I find that students who are really proficient in either line take up the other line very readily. After two years' thorough work with the emphasis on translation, college students can enter a course conducted entirely in German with very little disadvantage, and come out at the end of the year much better than those who enter it after a half-dozen years of "natural method." The whole matter, from this point of view merely, is not worth quarrelling about. Every teacher must determine for himself in what manner he can get the best results from the classes that come to him, and shape his methods accordingly.

Far more important is the question of the relative disciplinary value of the two methods. I am not one of those who

say flippantly that they "don't believe in mental discipline." Great abuses have existed in the name of mental discipline; but that should not blind us to the fact that, as Professor Thomas says elsewhere in the article from which I have quoted, "we cannot throw it too often or too hard the face of the public that our work is chiefly educational." It is our business to make out of the boys who come to us men who can reason clearly and correctly, and have the purpose and the power to use that ability to do with their might whatsoever their hands find to do. I would rather have contributed to the formation of the character of a thousand such men than have written the most brilliant philological work of the decade, or a text-book that sells a million copies. I have discussed at length elsewhere [1] the value of translation work in modern languages for this purpose. Compared with this, the value of any method which excludes translation is very slight. The advocates of such methods often admit this fact, but justify their method either by saying that they are not responsible for the mental discipline of their pupils, — that their business is to teach *German*, not to *teach* German, — or by claiming that the disciplinary feature of language work is covered by other studies, and that their work can be given to "practical" objects. The former amounts to the admission that they conceive of themselves as something extraneous to the proper work of education, — as hangers-on on its outskirts, like the *Sprachmeister;* the latter is again a case of a "condition and not a theory." Where a class of students has abundant drill in grammar and translation work in the classical languages, it is perfectly possible that a modern language teacher who is more at home in the "unilingual" method than in translation may do them more good in that way. The question here turns on the personality of the teacher. In any case it would be the height of folly to reject this potent instrument if it can be used; and if any educator does reject it, or finds

[1] See page 124.

that his modern language teacher is rejecting it, it behooves him to take strict account of the reasons for the course. The burden of proof is most certainly on the opponents of translation, not, as they would make it appear, on the other side.

The most important factor in the teaching of modern languages is the teacher. I have printed a discussion of the qualifications of modern language teachers, the points of which are in brief as follows:[1]—

1. Every teacher, in whatever department, should be a professional educator, who is in the work from choice, and in it to stay. He should teach his subject with reference to its educational effect, and should be able to see its relations to the more general problem of the training of mind.

2. He should be a man of broad general culture.

3. He should be thoroughly in touch with the mental life of his pupils, and able not only to follow, but to lead, their thoughts in their own language.

4. A modern language teacher should know intimately the language he is to teach; every word and turn of thought should mean to him something actual; he ought to be able to think in the language, to dream in it, to crack jokes in it; must have, in short, such a knowledge as is only possible to a person who has lived in the country where the language is spoken.

5. He must have sound and serious scholarly training in his special field; must know the history and literature of the language he teaches and of the languages related to it, and must keep abreast of the times in his scholarship.

"I believe that no teacher can be notably deficient in any of these five lines without impairing seriously his professional usefulness — so seriously as to shut him out from the very foremost rank in his profession." Are modern language teachers often found in the foremost ranks of the profession?

[1] Papers of the Modern Language Association, New Series, vol. i., p. lii.

President Harper, in a recent article on college salaries, enumerates a dozen or so of departments in the order of the salaries paid in them. He does not reach modern languages at all; and if at almost any institution the Commencement procession were formed in the order of amount of salaries, the modern language teacher would surely be found toward the tail end. Of course this is rather a Philistine view of the matter, but dollars and cents often furnish a touchstone by which we can prove higher things. The market price of anything is always a fair index of its quality; and we can legitimately ask, "Why is not the quality of the modern language instruction in our schools better?" My answer to this question you will have already anticipated. It is because there has prevailed a false conception of the nature of the work to be done, which has turned away the energy which should have gone into true educational work toward the practice of a mere art, and thrown the work into the hands of a set of men whose general average as educators is very low.

I have been accused on all sides of hostility toward foreigners as modern language teachers. I am hostile toward some foreigners, as I am toward some Americans, and for the same reason. I am hostile toward any one whose activity tends to lower the standard of my profession. I am hostile to any one who uses that profession as a makeshift while he (or she) is on the lookout for a better opening in some other occupation (such as law, medicine, or matrimony), or as a "snug harbor" after failure in something else. I am hostile to any one who sets a lower for a higher aim in any field of instruction. I am hostile to any one who undertakes any work of instruction without a thorough fitness for it.

Now, there are some classes of foreigners who are likely to incur my hostility for some of these reasons. First, the *Sprachmeister*, who are and should be foreigners. I have no hostility towards them so long as they attend to their business

and confine themselves to their legitimate sphere of usefulness. I send to them freely any of my students who want what they can give; but if they or their methods cross the threshold of the higher schools, I oppose them by all means in my power.

Then, there is the foreigner who is not a teacher. Any man trained as a teacher abroad, who should come here to practise his profession, teaching modern languages if that is his line, I would welcome, and give the same chance to make a place for himself that I would give to any teacher. A German with the training of a *Gymnasiallehrer* in modern languages, who had spent a year in England as he should, might come here and begin work with as good chance of ultimate success as most Americans. But if such a man is a good man, he is sure to find work at home; and, as the real state of things, we find too often that the foreigner who comes here to teach modern languages is some inferior specimen, who never quite found his place in the world, and comes to see if he cannot make a living by exploiting the tendency of the Americans to employ foreigners in modern language teaching. To such I am hostile; and so also I believe are the real teachers of foreign birth, who often know best how these fellows injure the profession.

There are men, too, who are of really superior ability, who have come to this country for various reasons (often because their very ability has made their own country less agreeable), who have turned to their language as a means of support, and worked their way through the *Sprachmeister* grade into real educators. Such men have for a generation played a very important part in our modern language instruction. Toward them I am not hostile in the sense that I am toward the other classes mentioned. I gladly recognize them as colleagues, and will work with them and discuss with them to reach our common object; and, if there is an honest difference of opinion, I am glad to talk it out with them in a temperate spirit. But I very often do find a difference of opinion which needs adjustment. It is among these men that a modified form of

Sprachmeisterei is most persistent, and, just because of their comparative moderation, most difficult to overcome. You will find that they all have in their hearts a lingering desire to dispense with translation, and do all their work in the language in which their thoughts move most freely — that they want their students to go the same way they went themselves in learning to read their language, namely, through the spoken language, which they are prone to consider *the* language *par excellence*. This tendency grows less generally as their proficiency in English increases; but you are liable to hear from the most liberal of them, in a tirade against translation, something like this: "Aside from the reading of the German text, and even that is not always done, the student hears and speaks nothing but English; in other words, for about ten minutes out of a possible fifty he learns German, the remaining forty minutes he learns facts about German." Epigrammatic and plausible; but you see the implications: the only German is that which is heard; hearing German is learning German, and you are not learning it unless you are hearing it; facts about German discussed in English do not help to learn German. Even the man who is thoroughly trained as a professional modern language teacher in Europe is likely to make too much of the spoken language for the needs of our schools, because the spoken language is of vastly more practical importance in Europe than with us, and the methods which are developed there very properly give it more consideration than it needs here.

There was at first, as was to be expected, a strong opposition on the part of the foreign-born teachers against the employment of Americans to teach modern languages. This has of late yielded very much, in the face of undeniable facts, among the better teachers in our schools and colleges, but is still in full force among the *Sprachmeister* and the public who take the cue from them. The fact is that really all-round men are not often found in modern languages. The foreigner

almost never gets over his disabilities on the third point of my list, unless he comes over so young that he is practically an American, or else spends years, *always at the expense of his pupils*, in mastering English and getting in touch with American life so that he can manage American boys. The American is likely to be deficient on the score of thorough practical knowledge in the language. In all other respects he is the equal of the foreigner, and in the matter of understanding the American student he is incomparably superior. He can by the same assiduity called for in the preparation of teachers for other work — by spending as much time in Europe as they spend in their laboratories — get a practical knowledge which is sufficient for his work. But the scale of salaries paid for modern language teaching has not yet warranted this thoroughness. There are American teachers who have it, as there are foreigners who have overcome their essential weak point; but I have known many cases of good men who began to prepare to teach modern languages, but turned off to some related field, such as English or history, because they could not see a living ahead of them in the face of the fierce competition of the foreign-born teachers, and a public sentiment which upheld the latter, and demanded a kind of work which was not up to the true standard of liberal education.

There is still a great deal of inertia to overcome, *Sprachmeister* traditions to be lived down, and "dead wood" on the teaching-force to be superannuated. It rests with those of you who employ teachers, and those of your kind elsewhere, to make the work of teaching modern languages what it should be in dignity and usefulness. Set your faces like flints against *Sprachmeisterei* in liberal education, employ no man or woman who is not a real educator by profession, and pay salaries which shall warrant the same earnestness and thoroughness of preparation which you expect in teachers of other subjects.

TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH.[1]

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In this paper on "Translation into English" I shall not so much treat of the method as try to give briefly my reasons for practising it in teaching. Its exclusive use, borrowed from the practice of the teachers of ancient languages, led nearly forty years ago to a great reaction, the so-called "Natural Method." This method went too far in the opposite direction, and we soon saw that the position of the child which is learning its mother tongue is unique, in that the child knows no other language whatsoever, and that, after one language has been learned, we cannot assume in our pupils the same favorable conditions as regards any other. But no sooner could we think this method safely disposed of, than there came to us from Germany and France the New Method, as it is now generally called in contradistinction to the old Grammatical or Translation Method. This is based on the modern view of language, as something really existing only in the actual speech of people, and therefore emphasizes the spoken language above everything else; it makes extended use of the results of the equally modern science of phonetics and consequently lays predominant stress on the acquisition of a faultless, if not accent-less pronunciation; and it insists upon the exclusive use of the foreign tongue as the only medium of instruction and of communication between teacher and pupil. The advocates of this reform method object to translation for two

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main reasons: in the first place, they say that the constant transition from the articulation of the organs of speech for the one language to that of the other makes the acquisition of an even decent pronunciation quite impossible; and, in the second place, they claim that by constantly translating from and into the foreign language nobody can form the habit of understanding the foreign language, or of thinking and speaking in it, independently of his mother tongue. And they like to wind up with the accusation that in the old method translation is treated as if it were the principal object of language teaching. To which advocates of the older methods retort that the reformers, forgetting entirely the literature of the foreign language and its study, make the mere speaking it the principal object of their teaching. And so the war has been waging in Germany, France, and Scandinavia for the last twenty-five years.

In this country, the discussion between the Natural and other methods had in time cleared the atmosphere sufficiently for us to see that both the translating and the speaking method have a right to be used, provided they are not considered the objects, but merely the means of our instruction. The preponderance of one or the other in our teaching will depend on the age of our pupils and on their immediate practical purpose in studying the foreign language. If our pupils are young or if their immediate aim is to learn to speak the language, of course we shall practise speaking to a great extent; but if — and this is our case in preparatory schools — our pupils are old enough to be rather set in their native-born modes of thinking, we shall have to reckon with the mother tongue; and especially, if their main object in studying a language is to pass the examination required by our colleges, we shall have to devote a great deal of our time to translating into and out of the language. We have to adapt ourselves to the conditions under which we have to teach; we are not responsible for these conditions.

But, even if we could change these conditions, I believe there are some reasons why we should never entirely give up translation into English.

In the first place, we have to consider the weaker members of our classes, boys or girls below the average, not necessarily in intellect, but certainly in linguistic talent. I have always felt very strongly the claims of the spoken language and have always desired to give to its practice as large a part of the time of my classes as possible. I have consequently used in former years the Natural method, as well as the Berlitz method, both in French and German; but, even when I had avoided the use of the English language for a while, I have almost always resorted to a translation of the whole ground covered, as a test of its thorough comprehension, and almost invariably have found some member of the class who had missed the correct meaning of a word or idiom, to whom, therefore, part of the lessons had remained a blank. There is in every class a pupil whose ear is very obtuse to foreign words, or one who persists in hearing nothing but English words out of the jumble of German or French sounds that strike his ear. What can we do for such a one but give him a word-for-word translation of even the simplest sentences? He has a right to learn as well as his more fortunate classmates with a gift for languages, and he must be taught in the manner in which he most readily takes in the knowledge that we have to impart to him. His having no ear for languages certainly ought not to keep him from learning them by sight, or from enjoying the science and literature embodied in them.

In the second place, I think it is a fallacy to believe that a foreign word is ever learned directly, by merely associating it with the object designated and without resorting to the corresponding word of the mother tongue. If I point to a chair or window, saying *c'est une chaise, das ist ein Fenster,* pupils will think of the English name of these objects at once, or even before I can give them the foreign appellation, because object

and name are by habit so closely connected in their minds that one involuntarily calls up the other. The word of the mother tongue cannot be eliminated simply by its not being mentioned. And so there is always a silent translating going on, especially when from these simple object lessons we pass on to a somewhat more intricate idea. My observation is that our pupils do not believe they have got the right meaning of a word until they have guessed the English equivalent. The German word *Gegenteil* expresses an idea the meaning of which can be made clear by a few examples: *Schwarz* is *das G. von weiss — gut von schlecht, gross von klein.* The first direct question: *Was ist das Gegenteil von kurz?* will generally elicit the correct answer from several members of a class, and a few more similar questions with their answers will spread the meaning of the word to the weaker members of the class, so that even they can give correct answers. But, when finally the English translation of the word is given, it is amusing to see the expression of evident relief that appears on a good many faces. Though these boys had had a general idea of what the word meant, as was shown by their correct answers, they undoubtedly had still been puzzled as to the exact meaning, which nothing but the translation could give them to their full satisfaction. And is not this the usual process by means of which we increase our vocabulary, either in our own or a foreign language? In meeting a word several times in various positions and connections, we get each time a clearer idea of what it may mean, and, when we have arrived at what we think is the correct meaning, we like to see, by consulting the dictionary, whether we have guessed correctly. Guessing does not exactly describe the mental process of evolving the meaning of a word from different contexts; it is more like finding an unknown quantity by means of an equation. Applied to languages, this operation constitutes a very good method for learning new words, because we get possession of the word first, and the mental labor we expend on getting at

its meaning insures its permanent retention in our memory. But it is a rather lengthy method and not always applicable in a class, where we cannot be sure that the mental operation is properly carried out. If the meaning of a word has been correctly evolved from the context, the translation gives an undeniable satisfaction and might be retained for that purpose alone; if not, a translation in time will save us a lot of trouble.

In the third place, there is no doubt that we need it as a criterion to determine whether the right meaning has been arrived at. There are in both French and German a great many words which by their form or by their sound lend themselves to constant misconceptions. *Attendre* does not mean to attend, nor *blesser* to bless, nor *se dresser* to dress one's self; the German word *Hausflur* does not mean the floor of the house, but its "hall," nor does *lustig* mean "lusty." And think what a chance *also* has to be identified with "also," and *denn* and *bekommen* to be taken for "then" and "to become." It would be easy to multiply these examples, and some of these mistakes look so elementary that it seems impossible that anybody should be misled by them. A woman of intelligence once told me that up to her thirtieth year she had always pronounced to herself the word "misled" as if it were the participle of a verb "to misle." Faintly conscious, perhaps, of her misconception, she had never used the word herself, so that she did not discover the error until she accidentally misread the word aloud to some one who was in a position to correct her. Do we not almost daily have the experience of being caught quite easily in the simplest traps? My inference is that we must have our pupils translate even the simplest German or French, so as to guard against all such misunderstandings. It does not take such a great deal of time to do this, but it is essential to apply this test to their knowledge, and to ascertain by this means its accuracy.

So far, I have had in view only the initial stages of language study, when it might still be possible to avoid translation and

exclude entirely the use of the mother tongue, and yet accomplish good results; when we pass on, however, to the reading of connected narrative or dialogue interspersed with historical and didactic passages, it is not such an easy matter to confine one's self to the use of the foreign language. For instance, in a conversation the word *gut* is often used in the sense of "all right," and *nun* in the sense of "well" as in the French *Eh bien.* Words also assume new meanings in different connections, and form with other words idiomatic expressions which have a meaning of their own, and which can most readily be learned by a simple translation. If in a certain passage the French word *onde* is explained by the other word *eau,* we may have been given the bare meaning of the passage; but, unless we are also told that the word really means "wave," all its poetry is simply lost on us. If the sentence, *cette idée sourit à mon père,* is explained by *elle lui parut bonne,* we do not gain much unless we are also made aware that *sourire* means "to smile." In order to remember well idioms such as *se faire fête de qlch, sich auf etwas freuen,* we must comprehend them in all their literalness, but their full force is not felt until the translation "to look forward to a thing with pleasure" is found. And there are stranger and more intricate idioms in every language, for which an equivalent expression in our own must be found before the mind is fully satisfied.

The objection may be raised that, by constantly translating, the pupil becomes dependent on the translation for getting at the sense of a passage in a foreign language. I think, however, that this fear is exaggerated. I am sure that our pupils read and understand perfectly, without translating, passages in simple French and German; that they read them that way constantly in preparation for their recitations, especially if the oral use of the language is not entirely neglected; and, as their vocabulary and their knowledge of more intricate constructions and idoms increase, they will read in this way longer

and longer passages, only halting at places where an unknown or less familiar word or expression or a more intricate thought makes a translation desirable. I find that, even in reading my own native German, I sometimes translate into English when I come to an obscure passage, the translation in such a case sometimes showing up the vagueness and looseness of the thinking processes of the author, or at any rate helping to make the passage perfectly clear. Inasmuch as our pupils need this clearing away of difficulties much oftener than we do, we need feel no compunction about using translation so constantly. Only one precaution ought to be observed: namely, never to have a passage translated without first having it read in the foreign language. This practice is of the utmost importance. Without it our pupils would never learn to take in an idea in the form in which it is presented by the foreign tongue.

Of course this ability to understand a passage without translating, though important when the rapid perusal of an article or a book is aimed at, does not serve the purpose of a pupil whose object is to pass a college examination. There, an intelligent translation into English is expected; and that, while it presupposes the receptive comprehension of the text, calls for a reproductive mental activity that can be gained only by constant practice. I need not enlarge upon this point. Here is an argument that would compel even the most enthusiastic advocate of the New Method to retain translation as a prominent feature of his teaching, at least during the last year of the school course. I do not quarrel with the colleges for keeping it on their programs. My line of argument is all in favor of their position, and I will add to my other reasons a last one, that looks at the matter from a more general educational point of view.

I refer to the value of translation for our pupils' English mother tongue. I take it that the use of the mother tongue (in this case English) is the centre of all school instruction.

All the various studies pursued at school may have aims of their own, but if any one of them did not subserve the study of English, I am sure it would soon be abandoned. In fact, what good would all the knowledge we impart to our pupils do them if they could not, if they did not, acquire at the same time an increasing facility in expressing this knowledge in their own language? We take it too often for granted that our pupils know all about the English language. For instance, we want them well grounded in English grammar before they come to our classes, and get impatient when they cannot distinguish between a pronoun and an adjective, between a relative and an interrogative pronoun, between an adverb and a conjunction, forgetting that that is just what we are there for, namely, to make them see logical distinctions that the English language does not make. Nor are they always sure of the correct use of the prepositions or the meaning of the more unusual words and phrases. There is no better opportunity for discussing synonyms than when translating from a foreign language. Original composition fails to give the desired mastery of the English language, because the pupil may discard the words and constructions about which he is doubtful and uncertain, for the simpler and more familiar ones; considering, as a boy is said to have put it, that the use of synonyms consists in employing one word "when you do not know how to spell the other." Translation, on the other hand, forces a great many new and useful words and phrases upon the learner's attention, and helps, therefore, to enlarge his vocabulary and to extend his power of expression to thoughts more mature and profound than could have originated in his own brain.

In this connection, I may mention that translation also makes the new subjects and new ideas which he meets with in foreign authors more immediately and practically available. When, in Germany or France, we read an article, essay, or book, we are, of course, interested in remembering its subject matter or thought-context in the German or French form, be-

cause only thus can we make use of it in conversing with Frenchmen or Germans; but, as long as we live among English-speaking people, if we wish to communicate to them ideas and facts that we have gathered from foreign sources, our first effort will be to clothe them in a form that will make them available for this purpose.

You may think it quite unnecessary that I should rehearse here all these reasons for the practice of translation into English, of the use of which you are probably perfectly convinced. What I have said is not meant to convince anybody, but to justify to myself the extended use I am making of this means of instruction. With the exclusive use of translation I have never been satisfied; I have for years, therefore, read eagerly the reform literature so abundantly supplied by Germany in books, pamphlets, and Vietor's publication, *Die Neueren Sprachen*, and as a result I have been confirmed in my conviction that the oral use of the language, which I had never quite given up since the days of the Natural Method, is just the corrective we need to make our teaching both interesting to our pupils and satisfactory to ourselves. Feeling strongly, therefore, the claims of the spoken language, I might have gone the full length of the reform method, if the peculiar conditions under which we teach here, the age of our pupils and the college requirements, had not necessitated the retention of translation; and, finding myself thus in opposition to views with which I am at heart very much in sympathy, I have looked for as many reasons as I could find in justification of my course. If this self-examination has taxed your patience, I apologize.

But I shall not close without a few remarks in favor of the oral use of languages. After enlarging on the uses of translation, it is only just that I should also say what I think it cannot do.

1. It cannot teach pronunciation. On the contrary, the change which it involves from the articulation of the language

to be learned to that of the mother tongue counteracts directly the acquisition of a good pronunciation. Phonetic explanations are of no avail, and the reading of a few sentences or short passages leads only to worse bungling. Only speaking the language can suffice, using it in question and answer, in conversation or short anecdotes. For every sentence that you can have your pupils read you can ask half a dozen questions, and you can ask every question half a dozen times without boring the class. There need be no fear of that; young pupils like to do something and are eager for their turn to answer. Do you think you could have an exercise of six sentences read by every pupil in the class without causing a revolt? And here is a large amount of German or French being spoken with pleasure — and spoken after having heard it pronounced by the teacher correctly and with the proper intonation. This must lead to a tolerable pronunciation and trains the ear as well. But let me insist, it cannot be done without a great amount of speaking. A good pronunciation is a very gradual growth; it must be started right by correct explanations of the new sounds and some sort of phonetic drill, so that no faulty habits are formed at the beginning. Moreover, only years of practice can give that ease of articulation and that particular intonation which are the essentials of what we call the accent of a foreign language.

2. Translation cannot give a vocabulary. I mean a working vocabulary, the words of which are at our fingers' ends and jump to the tip of our tongue whenever we are in need of them. Translation provides us with the meaning of words, but it does not associate the idea and the word together so that one may call up the other; nor does it fasten them in our memories in such a way that they are available for our use whenever we need them. Only speaking can do this, because only by speaking can we get the necessary amount of practice. We have complete command of a word only after we have used it in all its different forms and in all possible contexts. No amount of

translating can give us such opportunities. But can speaking do this? Yes, only we must distinguish a working vocabulary from the general dictionary of a language. The former contains all the most common words, from 700 to 1000. These are all that are really necessary to understand a language, but then they must really be part and parcel of our linguistic outfit. The meanings of all other words we either get from the dictionary, or else they come to us from the context of a series of familiar words. Now I should not consider it an unrational plan to devote the first year of language study principally to the acquisition of such a working vocabulary by all possible means, but especially by the practice of speaking. The rest of the language would gradually grow around this nucleus by a kind of crystallizing process, and for this gradual growth translation, of course, is of great assistance; hence, it would find its place in the later years of the course.

3. Translation does not teach one to think in a foreign language. By thinking is not meant logical thinking. Of course we can never teach our pupils to reason, make inferences, and draw conclusions in French or German, or, as it has been put, make a boy rack his brains in German or cudgel his brains in French. What is meant by "thinking in a language" is merely the ability to express a thought in the foreign language or to take in a thought clothed in a form of the foreign language, and to do this directly, without taking the roundabout way through the mother tongue. That this can be done is a matter of a very common experience; in studying a foreign language we always aim at this, and we are sure of having made progress in a language when we feel we can think in it. This, of course, is the very opposite of translating. As I have said, however, translating is not quite so much of an obstacle in the way of this result as would seem at first glance. Just because it is a roundabout way, the mind refuses to travel it and does without it, as soon as it gets some familiarity with the ground to go over. Only we must assist the mind a little in gaining this familiar-

ity, and that can best be done by speaking — which involves constant practice, constant repetition, without which there cannot be any real familiarity with a subject, especially a language.

If, then, we would have our pupils get a good pronunciation, a good working vocabulary, and some ability to take in the meaning of a passage without translating, we ought to include the practice of speaking in our modern language courses. There is also this general consideration that should never permit us to omit the oral use of a language which we are teaching: speaking is the essential part of a language. We teach German script, not because it is of so very much importance, but because it belongs to German, and if we omitted the script from our German courses we should neglect part of our duty, which is to teach as much of German as we can under the circumstances. We teach a great many things that are of no importance in themselves: *e.g.* that *der Käse* is the only masculine noun in *e* belonging to the first class of the strong declension, or that the verb *bénir* forms an irregular past participle in *t*, and so forth, while we slight more or less — let us confess that we do it — the most essential part of a language, namely, a speaking knowledge of it. It is an incontrovertible axiom with me, that nobody can pretend to know a language unless he can speak it. Do we consider that our immigrants know English as long as they cannot speak it? And yet there are people who think they know French and German without being able to speak them. Send them to France or Germany, if you want to disabuse them. Look at the fate of Latin. As long as it was spoken in class and lecture room, people got a fairly good knowledge and command of it; they did not leave it behind, when they left the halls of learning, but read and enjoyed their classic authors all their lives. Latin was alive as long as the teachers of Latin kept it alive, and became a dead language only when they killed it by dropping its oral use. Now, French and German are living languages. The question is: Ought we to teach them as if they were dead?

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